AN

INVESTIGATION

INTO

OUR PRESENT RECEIVED

CHRONOLOGY.

Price Two Shillings.

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2

AN

INVESTIGATION

Into our preſent received Chronology.

WHEREIN IT IS PROPOSED

CLEARLY TO POINT OUT AND PROVE SEVERAL

ESSENTIAL ERRORS,

OF VERY CONSIDERABLE MAGNITUDE,

CONTAINED IN THE PERIOD OF TIME

Comprehended between the Birth of Abram,

AND THE BIRTH OF CHRIST;

INSOMUCH,

THAT ALTHO' IT IS OVER-RECKONED MATERIALLY

IN TWO INSTANCES,

YET UPON THE WHOLE

IT IS EVIDENTLY UNDER-RECKONED

AS MUCH AS 115 YEARS,

Viz. That Chriſt was born in the Year 4119,

AND NOT IN THE YEAR 4004.

THE WHOLE INDISPUTABLY PROVED FROM

THE SCRIPTURE,

WHICH IS ITS OWN BEST INTERPRETER.

BY A FRIEND OF TRUTH.

Shrewsbury:

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1798.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

PREFACE.

THE Author of this Work humbly hopes for, and earneſtly ſolicits, the candour of the Reader, for the following reaſons: 1ſt, Becauſe he is extremely ſenſible of his defect in abilities, as a writer, this being the firſt effort he ever made; and this he would have been happy to have declined, could he have prevailed on any perſon more capable to undertake the taſk, as nothing but the very great importance of the ſubject could ever have induced him to attempt ſo arduous an undertaking. 2dly, Becauſe the ſubject, in itſelf, is extremely abſtruſe; not that it was ſo originally, or primarily, but has been rendered ſo, by the falſe comments and miſconſtructions which have from time to time been put upon it, and from which, he is well aware, it will be extremely difficult to extricate it.

Notwithſtanding theſe diſheartening circumſtances and conſiderations, the LOVE of TRUTH has ultimately prevailed, and determined the Author not to keep back from the world a diſcovery which he conceives to be of great importance, conſequently an indiſpenſible duty on him to make publick. He alſo hopes that no perſon whom he has had occaſion to quote, or differ in opinion from, will take offence thereat; as there was none intended by the Author, they being all utter ſtrangers to him. One in particular, he begs leave to mention, as having been under the

the neceſſity of differing from in two or three inſtances, viz. Mr. T. Prieſtley; whoſe ſuperior abilities, in every other inſtance, the author holds in the higheſt poſſible eſtimation. His reaſon for quoting him was, that he had not ſeen any other author who had been ſo explicit upon the different parts of the ſubject he has had occaſion to diſcuſs under the third propoſition. Neither would he have it to be underſtood, that he looks upon Mr. Prieſtley's opinion to be ſingular, or different from that of his cotemporaries, or predeceſſors; but, on the contrary, that he includes their opinions, as well as his, and begs leave to differ from them all, as to the points he has had occaſion to introduce for diſcuſſion, in the courſe of the ſecond and third propoſitions.

Having ſaid thus much, he entirely refers himſelf to a candid, generous, and impartial publick, not doubting but they will give the work a deliberate and unprejudiced peruſal; without which, he conceives, it will be impoſſible for any perſon, however acute their capacity, to give a fair opinion, either with reſpect to its merits or demerits.

☞ *The Author, not being ambitious of affixing his name to the title page of the following work, informs thoſe of his readers who may wiſh to be acquainted with it, that the publiſhers are authorized to ſatisfy any enquiries on that head.*

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PROPOSITION I.

That there does exiſt an obvious Error of 60 Years, over-reckoned in the Computation of our Chronologiſts, from the Birth of Abram to the Time he was called by God to leave his Father's Houſe, at the Age of 75.

A BITTER diſpute has ariſen among Chronologiſts concerning this point, viz. At what Year of his Father Terah, Abram was born? which diſpute, I find, has originated from, or been occaſioned by, their putting a too rigorous and unqualified conſtruction upon the words of St. Stephen, recorded in Acts vii. 4. in oppoſition to the record of Moſes, Gen. xi. 26.

The diſpute in itſelf is ſimply this; viz. Whether Abram was born in the 70th year of his father's age, according to the record of Moſes, Gen. xi. 26. or in the 130th year of Terah's age, as ſome ingenious commentators contend.

I beg leave to ſtand forth an advocate for the firſt opinion, viz. That he was born in the 70th year of Terah's age, according to the record of

Moſes, Gen. xi. 26. Which hypotheſis, if ſufficiently eſtabliſhed, (which, I truſt, I ſhall be able to do) will clearly detect an error of 60 years, over-reckoned in our received chronology, from the time of Abram's birth to the time of his going into the Land of Canaan, at the age of 75.

I have ſeen three different opinions reſpecting this point. The firſt is laid down by Mr. JOHN BASKETT, printer to the Univerſity of Oxford, in a Bible publiſhed in 1736, which ſays in a note on Gen. xi. 32, in the index, "That Terah begat not "Abram in the 70th year of his age, but only "Nahor and Haran; and that in the 130th year "of his age he begat Abram."

A ſecond opinion is advanced and ſupported by Mr. POOLE, a Latin author, who contends, "That at 70 Terah had ONLY begat Haran, his "eldeſt ſon;" though Moſes ſays he had begotten three.

A third opinion is held by Mr. STACKHOUSE, who ſays, "That Terah only LIVED to the age of "145, according to the Samaritan Verſion, and "the Samaritan Chronicle; which (he ſays) "without doubt do agree with the Hebrew copy, "from which they are tranſlated; and as to its "being ſaid that Terah died in Haran at the age "of 205, muſt proceed from an error crept "into the text of Moſes, by ſome means or other."

I proceed now to confute, and ſhew the fallacy of the firſt opinion, by making it appear that we have not the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon to believe or credit the aſſertion, That Terah did not beget

Abram

Abram till he was 130 years old; but, on the contrary, we have every reaſon to believe, that he certainly did beget him at the age ſtated by Moſes, viz. at the age of 70. It is much to be regretted, that perſons ſhould ſo haſtily preſume to wreſt and diſtort the Scriptures, in order to make them fall in with their own pre-conceived and warped opinions, without firſt being certain that they had ſufficient authority for ſo doing. That there APPEARS a contradiction between Stephen and Moſes, is manifeſtly evident. But how has this been rectified by our chronologiſts? I anſwer, by flatly giving the lie to Moſes, in order to eſtabliſh the aſſertion of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 4. To ſhew, therefore, who is entitled to the greateſt credit, is the ſole hinge of this diſcuſſion.

And firſt, let it be particularly obſerved, that they have no authority whatever from the words of St. Stephen, for aſſerting that Terah begat not Abram till he (Terah) was 130; for ONE of the three opinions, I have juſt quoted, contends that Terah died at 145, conſequently muſt have begotten Abram at 70. Therefore, as I have juſt before obſerved, they have no authority, even from the words of St. Stephen, in one inſtance more than another, for ſubverting the plain, poſitive RECORD of Moſes, Gen. xi. 26. As ſuch, they ſhould have left the matter juſt as they found it, unleſs they could have deviſed means to eſtabliſh St. Stephen's aſſertion, Acts vii. 4. without flatly CONTRADICTING Moſes.

Let us now proceed to examine what degree of

probability is annexed to their idea, viz. " That " Abram was not born till the 130th year of his " father Terah's age." Mr. BASKETT, you will obſerve, admits that Nahor and Haran were both born when Terah was 70 years old; this being admitted, it follows of courſe, that it was as much as 60 years after before Terah had his third ſon Abram. And we do not read of his having any more than three ſons in all, neither do we read a ſyllable of his ever having any ſecond wife. It muſt be a ſtrange circumſtance indeed, that Terah ſhould have two ſons by the time he was 70; and not to have the third ſon before he was 130. But admitting, for a moment, that was the caſe, let us ſee how this idea of their's will anſwer their purpoſe as to probability.

We are told, Gen. xi. 29. that Abram and Nahor took them wives, &c. And further, that theſe wives were two ſiſters, daughters to their elder brother Haran. Now is it not unaccountable, and even abſurd, to ſuppoſe that two brothers, who differed in their age as much as 60 years, ſhould take them wives of two nieces, SISTERS? and that Abram ſhould marry his wife firſt by ſome years, though (according to their hypotheſis) his brother Nahor was ſo much older? For, obſerve, it is ſaid, Sarai was barren, ſhe had no child. And this was when Abram was 75 years old, conſequently, Nahor muſt have been at that time at leaſt 135: a very unlikely circumſtance, even in thoſe days, for a perſon to remain unmarried till that age, viz. 135; and to beget twelve children

children afterwards, eight by Milcah, and four by Reuma his concubine, Gen. xxii. 21, 22, 24. And it is clearly evident that he, Nahor, had no child by Milcah, when Abram left him behind in Charron; as it is told Abraham as a matter of great joy, Gen. xxii. 20. that Milcah had BORNE children to his brother Nahor; which clearly implies, that he, Abraham, was unacquainted with it till he was told it; and he muſt have known it if that he, Nahor, had any previous to Abram's departure out of Charron. Obſerve, all theſe improbabilities are however admitted, in order to countenance and ſupport a negative expreſſion of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 4. in contradiction to the poſitive aſſertion of Moſes, Gen. xi. 26.

How abſurd, in the firſt place, to ſuppoſe that Terah ſhould beget Nahor and Haran, by the time he was 70, and not to beget Abram, his third ſon, till 60 years after! And again, that Abram and Nahor ſhould marry two nieces, who were ſiſters, notwithſtanding ſuch a diſparity of age; and that Nahor ſhould marry his wife LAST too, (by ſome years) at the advanced age of 135, altho' we have an account of his immediate progenitors, for ten generations before, having all married from 30 to 35 years old. See Gen. xi. 11 to 25. And Abraham deemed it a miracle to have a child at 100. See Gen. xvii. 17. And furthermore, that after marrying at 135, he, Nahor, ſhould have as many as 12 children; and eight of thoſe by his niece Milcah, who muſt have been, in all probability, 100 years old; altho' we read of its being a miracle

for Sarah to bear at 90. See as above, Gen. xvii. 17. I do not take upon me to ſay that ſuch things are totally impoſſible, but it certainly is extremely improbable.

I proceed now, to examine into the merits of the ſecond opinion, ſtated in the outſet of this propoſition; which opinion is advanced and ſupported by Mr. POOLE, a latin author, who, commenting upon Gen. xi. 32, affirms, that, at the age of 70, Terah had only begat Haran, his eldeſt ſon; and refers you, for proof of this, to Gen. v. 32. inferring thereby, that at the age of 500, Noah had only begotten Japheth, his eldeſt ſon. Then he proceeds, and ſays, that as it is certain that Japheth is the eldeſt there, (Gen. x. 21.) ſo doubtleſs Haran is the eldeſt of thoſe mentioned Gen. xi. 26. He then goes on, and ſays, that as Abram is ſaid by Stephen, Acts vii. 4, to have quitted Haran after the death of his father, (and Terah died at the age of 205) and Abram being no more than 75 when he left Charron, that of courſe, it follows, that he, Abram was not begotten till Terah was 130. Mr. POOLE then ſays, that the thing is plain enough, but men will make difficulties.

Now I so FAR agree with Mr. POOLE, as to admit that Haran was the eldeſt of Terah's ſons, and that Japheth was the elder of NOAH's. But I deny that Mr. POOLE has at all proved, that JAPHETH was not begotten till Noah was 500. As it is certain, that if SHEM, Noah's youngeſt ſon, was not begotten when Noah was 500 years old, he was begotten within two years after at furtheſt.

ſurtheſt. Which two years, I truſt, however, I ſhall be able to account for and reconcile.

Now in the firſt place, it is poſſible that Moſes might look upon two years, as too trivial a matter to mention in a round number of 500. But even ſuppoſing him to have been guilty of ſuch an omiſſion, yet let it be obſerved, he takes particular care to mention at what time Shem begat Arphaxad, ſee Gen. xi. 10. viz. two years after the flood. So that it clearly appears, either that Noah muſt have been 502 at the time he begat Shem; or elſe, that Shem muſt have been 102 when he begat Arphaxad. If we infer in the firſt inſtance, that Noah WAS 502 when he begat Shem, then indeed it muſt be allowed, that Moſes has been guilty of an omiſſion, or error of TWO years. But even admitting THAT was the caſe, it is BUT TWO years; and Moſes takes care to rectify it afterwards, by informing us of the preciſe time when Arphaxad was born; viz. two years after the flood. Whereas, if either of the foregoing opinions be admitted, there will appear a vacuum of no leſs than 60 years between the preciſe time of Abram's birth, as recorded by Moſes, Gen. xi. 26, and the CONJECTURAL time of his birth, according to the hypotheſis of the two foregoing commentators, Mr. B. and Mr. P. I ſay, admitting for a moment Moſes to BE guilty of an omiſſion of TWO years, with reſpect to the age of Noah, when he begat Shem; yet if it be an omiſſion, it is but TWO years in a period of 500, (Noah's age) and that he takes care to rectify afterwards; whereas the vacuum in queſtion, were it admiſſible, would be no leſs than 60 years,

and that too in the ſmall period of 70 years, Terah's age, when it is ſaid he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran: and this omiſſion, if it BE DEEMED an omiſſion, MOSES never rectifies at all. And as to the concluſion drawn from the words of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 4, I inſiſt is totally inadmiſſible, as ſhall be proved in its proper place.

I come now to conſider, the ſeeming error of two years with reſpect to the ſecond inſtance, viz. at what age of Shem ARPHAXAD was begotten? Whether at the age of 100, or 102? It is ſaid, Gen. xi. 10, that "Shem was an 100 years old, and "begat Arphaxad TWO YEARS AFTER the flood:" that is, He, Shem, was (I ſhould conceive) an 100 years old AT the flood, and begat Arphaxad two years AFTER the flood: for I do inſiſt upon it, that there CANNOT be the leaſt doubt, but that if Moſes alludes to the time when either of the ſons of Noah was begotten, it certainly muſt be SHEM. It being a matter totally immaterial to the ſubject Moſes had in hand, at what age Noah begat either Ham or Japheth; as he does not take the leaſt notice at what age either of THEM begat ANY of THEIR children; nor even at what time SHEM begat any of HIS ſons except Arphaxad. See Gen. x. 22, and xi. 10. Neither, let it be obſerved, is it mentioned at what age any of his, Noah's, progenitors for nine generations, from Adam to Noah, begat any of THEIR ſons, except ONE SON OF EACH ONLY; and that not always the eldeſt: for inſtance, Seth was Adam's third ſon. See Gen. v. 3. And although he begat others before, ſee iv. 1. and 2. and alſo afterwards

afterwards, ſee v. and 4, yet it is only noticed by Moſes, at what age Adam begat SETH, it being in a direct line from him that Chriſt was to come: for the ſame reaſon it is only mentioned throughout the nine generations, at what age either of them begat any of their ſons, except one each. The reaſon why HAM and JAPHETH are mentioned along with Shem is OBVIOUS, by reaſon that they were to people by far the greateſt part of the earth after the flood: conſequently, it was neceſſary for Moſes to inform us whoſe ſons they were.

Obſerve further, ARPHAXAD is not the eldeſt of Shem's ſons, but the third, ſee Gen. x. 22. yet he is the ONLY ONE that is mentioned at what time he was begotten, viz. two years after the flood. See Gen. xi. 10. Likewiſe, there is only one ſon, and no more, of any of his deſcendants mentioned, till we come to Terah; ſee Gen. xi. 12 to 26. and then Moſes informs us that TERAH lived 70 years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; that is, he begat Abram, his youngeſt ſon, at that age, and Nahor and Haran before. I think it alſo worthy of remark, that Abram was the third ſon of Terah, ſo alſo was Arphaxad the third ſon of Shem; Shem alſo was the third ſon of Noah, and Seth the third ſon of Adam.

Further, I beg it may be obſerved, that the ſeven perſons who preceded Terah in lineal deſcent, all of them married and begat children, when they were from 29 to 35 years of age, Gen. xi. 12—25. which renders it the more probable that Terah alſo married at near the ſame age, or, however,

long

long before 70; and might have begotten both Nahor and Haran long before then, though not as much as 60 years before neither; the time Mr. POOLE will have it that Haran was begotten before Abram. And MARK, 60 years at the time of Terah, is more in proportion to his age, than 260 years would have been to Noah. Therefore, I ſay, if it be inſiſted upon that Moſes was guilty of a remiſſneſs, with reſpect to informing us at what age of Noah Shem was born, viz. at 500 or 502, yet theſe two years (which by the bye he ſets right afterwards) would not be an hundredth part of the magnitude in proportion to Noah's age, as what 60 years are to that of Terah, when it is ſaid he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

And that it is poſſible Moſes might think two years too trivial a time to particularize, when ſpeaking of the round number of 500 years, I refer you to a ſimilar inſtance in Gen. xvii. 17. where it is ſaid, that Abram was then an hundred years old, although we are expreſsly informed in the 24th verſe, that he was only 99 years old at that time, viz. at the time God ſpoke with him, and he was circumciſed the ſelf-ſame day, verſe 23, and that he was then no more than 99, and not an 100, as mentioned in the 17th verſe. Compare Gen. xvii. 24. with xxi. 5. What I would infer from the above obſervation, is, that although Moſes may ſeem to have erred in recording the age of Abram when God talked with him, verſe 17, yet he takes care to ſet the matter right afterwards, ſee Gen. xvii. 21, 24, with xxi. 5. And although Moſes might omit ſpecifying the exact age of Noah

Noah when he begat Shem, yet he takes particular care to inform us at what time Arphaxad was begotten, viz. two years after the Flood. So that we are certain, that either Noah was 502 when he begat Shem, or that Shem was 102 when he begat Arphaxad; that is, he was 100 years old at the Flood, and begat Arphaxad two years after.

Probably the Hebrew text would clear up the point, had I an opportunity of availing myſelf of the information. But if not, I ſhould ſtill be of the opinion, that it is extremely probable that the omiſſion might be made by ſome of the numerous tranſcribers from time to time, before the art of printing was known or invented, which was not till Anno Domini 1441. Conſequently, it is very poſſible that in taking haſty copies in writing, ſuch a trivial alteration might eaſily happen. That there has much greater happened, I refer you to Ezekiel i. 1. where the word THIRTIETH is introduced inſtead of the word THIRTEENTH. Innumerable other inſtances of a ſimilar kind might be pointed out from the Margins of the Bible, were it neceſſary; for my part I think the thing clearly ſpeaks for itſelf, and that it certainly muſt be ſo.*

Furthermore, before I quit this part of the ſubject, I beg leave to obſerve, and repeat, that there is every reaſon to believe and conclude, that Terah married long before he was 70, and begat Nahor and Haran before that age; and that at that age he begat ABRAM. It being a matter of no kind of moment (as has been before obſerved of Ham

* The author has conſulted ſeveral learned divines upon this point, and they perfectly accord with him in opinion.

Ham and Japheth) when, or at what age of TERAH, Nahor and Haran were begotten, as Moſes takes no notice whatever when any of their SONS or poſterity were begotten; but he takes particular care to inform us at what age of Abraham Iſaac was born; alſo at what age of Iſaac Jacob was born; ſee Gen. xxi. 5, and xxv. 26.

Theſe circumſtances abundantly ſerve to prove, that Moſes means to inform us, Gen. xi. 26, when ABRAM in particular was born or begotten; for if Abram was not begotten at the time Moſes ſays he was, viz. when Terah was 70, he leaves us totally at a loſs to know when he, ABRAM, was begotten; which would derogate greatly from the PRECEDING aſtoniſhing preciſion and correctneſs of Moſes. The omiſſion would be quite unpardonable in Moſes, to give us no account at all at what time ſo illuſtrious a character as ABRAM was begotten or born: this would be breaking, at one ſtroke, the maſter link which connects the whole chain of the Bible chronology, as it is regularly calculated TO and FROM the time of his receiving the firſt promiſe, at the age of 75.

If it ſhould be urged, that St. Stephen, Acts vii. 4. ſets us right as to this particular, I inſiſt upon it that he does not; for, admitting that Stephen was right as to the idea of Abram's leaving Charron after his father's death, at the age of 75, yet he by no means informs us HOW LONG after his father's death it WAS that he left it; whether ONE, TWO, THREE, or TEN years after; and one year ONLY would ſerve to invalidate the divine

divine authenticity of Moſes's chronology as effectually as one hundred. Beſides, were that not the caſe, how was the chronology to have been aſcertained previous to St. Stephen's conſtruction of it? As Moſes, I am ſure, does no where ſay that HIS, ABRAM's father, Terah was dead previous to his leaving Charron, but quite the contrary; for he tells us in no leſs than three places, firſt, that God required him to leave; ſecondly, cauſed him to wander; and thirdly, even TOOK him from his FATHER'S HOUSE.

St. Stephen ſays, Acts vii. 3, that Abraham was commanded to get him out of his country, and from his kindred, and come into the land that God would ſhew him. Now, let it be obſerved, St. Stephen omits one thing which is very material. Moſes, Gen. xii. 1. ſays MORE than this; he adds, "and from thy father's houſe;" &c. Now, I contend, that Abram could NOT, with any degree of propriety, be ſaid to be called to leave his father's houſe, unleſs his father Terah was then living at the time of his departure; for obſerve, he had BEFORE left his country, and his kindred, in leaving Ur of the Chaldees, wherein numbers of his kindred were yet living, even to the eighth and ninth generations. See Gen. xi. 11 to 24. Indeed it appears that all of them were living, except Abram's grandfather Nahor, and Abram's brother Haran; even SHEM himſelf lived as much as 135, and Ebar as much as 164 years, after that he, Abram, quitted Charron, at the age of 75. See Gen. xi. 11 and 17. Thus, you will obſerve, Abram

may

may with the greateſt propriety be ſaid, in the firſt inſtance, to have left his country, and his kindred, by leaving Ur of the Chaldees. But obſerve, now he is required, in the ſecond inſtance, to leave his FATHER'S HOUSE, and that then God would do ſuch and ſuch things for him. See Gen. xii. 2, 3, &c. Verſe 5, " And Abram took Sarai his wife, and LOT his brother's ſon, and all their ſubſtance that they had GATHERED, and the ſouls that they had gotten in Haran, &c."

Now here firſt obſerve the expreſſion, they took with them " all the ſubſtance that THEY had " GATHERED :" not any ſubſtance which would have fallen to their ſhares had Terah been dead; but ſuch as they themſelves had GATHERED, " and " the ſouls that they had gotten in Haran." This without doubt, muſt allude to Lot's daughters: ſee Gen. xix. 8, 12, 14. juſt 24 years after, for we are informed that Abram had no child. Let it be obſerved, that Abram, his nephew Lot, his father Terah, &c. had all left their kindred in Ur of the Chaldees, ſome time before this; ſee Gen. xi. 31. and had dwelt together ſome years in Haran. Therefore, if his father Terah had been dead previous to Abram's departure, I do not ſee how it could with any propriety be ſaid, that he was called to leave his FATHER'S HOUSE; for in that caſe it muſt have been his brother NAHOR'S HOUSE that he left, and that too before Nahor HAD any children, ſee Gen. xxii. 20. or Abram would have known it.

But, to prove that his father Terah was not dead when he quitted Haran, I refer you to Abram's

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own teſtimony, as recorded by Moſes, Gen. xx. 13, and xxiv. 7. Firſt, he ſays, that he was cauſed by God to WANDER from his FATHER'S HOUSE; and again, he ſays, that it was the Lord God of heaven, that TOOK HIM from his FATHER'S HOUSE. It is well known, that after the death of a father, the ſeparation of brethren is a natural conſequence; but I think it is manifeſtly evident, from the tenor of both the above paſſages, that Abram means to have himſelf underſtood, that he was required to forego the protection of his father Terah, in order to put himſelf under GOD'S; and this idea perfectly correſponds with the words of Chriſt, Matt. x. 37. But it by no means appears, from either of the above paſſages, or from Gen. xii. 1, that his removal was either OCCASIONED, or PRECEDED by the death of his father; but that, on the contrary, he was impelled by God to leave his FATHER'S HOUSE, when his father was living.

If it ſhould be contended, that by the term leaving his FATHER'S HOUSE, Abram meant nothing more than leaving his brother Nahor, and the houſe which had been his father's when living, I deny it; and if you only refer to the charge given by Abraham to his ſervant, when he ſent him to take a wife for his ſon Iſaac, Gen. xxiv. 4, you will find that he directs him to his kindred.

I proceed now to examine into the merits of the third opinion, on this ſubject, ſet forth by Mr. STACKHOUSE, who ſays, that, "Terah only lived "to the age of 145, according to the Samaritan "verſion, and the Samaritan chronicle; which, he

"ſays

" ſays, without doubt do agree with the Hebrew " copy, from which they are tranſlated. And as " to its being ſaid, that Terah died in Haran, at " the age of 205, muſt proceed from an error crept " into the text of Moſes."

Now, if this opinion of Mr. STACKHOUSE were well founded, it would ſettle the point under diſcuſſion at once, and that in favour of my argument. But, I am very much inclined to ſuſpect, that this opinion of his, as well as the other two juſt quoted and diſcuſſed, is founded in error; for altho' he aſſerts, that the Samaritan verſion and chronicle do both agree that Terah lived only to the age of 145, yet I find myſelf inclined to give a decided preference to the verſion, or tranſlation, of the LXX. who alſo, without doubt, muſt have had the Hebrew text to copy from. And I ſhould be rather inclined to think, that the Samaritan tranſlators, finding a difficulty in ſolving the paſſage in queſtion, ſo as to reconcile it with the other two, which ſpeak of Terah's age when he begat Abram, and Abram's age when he left Charron, might take the liberty of altering the text, Gen. xi. 32, which mentions at what age Terah died. Well knowing, that the other two particulars above alluded to were ſo ſtrong as to be incontrovertible; viz. that Terah begat Abram at the age of 70, and Abram left Charron at the age of 75; conſequently they would be led to conclude, that if Terah WAS dead, prior to Abram's leaving Charron, he certainly muſt have died at the age of 145. But what I am moſt of all inclined to think, is, that THEY, the

the Samaritans, and Stephen, Acts vii. 4. miſconſtrued the meaning of the paſſage, *viz.* in ſuppoſing, or concluding, from the words recorded, Gen. xi. 32, that Terah WAS dead prior to Abram's leaving Charron. For my part, I am clearly of opinion, that the words DO NOT imply any ſuch thing, as that he Terah was dead at that time, but that he certainly WAS NOT.

The matter clearly ſtrikes me in this light: Moſes, being juſt about to enter on a new ſubject, thought it proper, (before he took final leave of the ſubject he was then upon) to record at what age Terah, Abram's father, died: having before recorded at what age HIS anceſtors had all died: and I am well convinced, that this ſentence being miſconſtrued, gave birth to Stephen's miſtake; for, I do inſiſt, that there is not the leaſt reaſon whatever to INFER from the words of Moſes, recorded Gen. xi. 32, that Terah was at that time dead. Moſes only informs us at what age he did die, but by no means intimates that he was then dead. And what tends to render this idea ſtill more probable, is, that Moſes is not recording theſe circumſtances, at the time they took place, or juſt as they occurred; but ſo much as 585 years after the death of Terah actually took place, and ſo much as 645 years after the call of Abram, Gen. xii. 1 to 4, at the age of 75, at which time his father Terah could only be 145, conſequently was not then dead; and did not die till 60 years after; as we are informed, Gen. xi. 32, that he died at the age of 205. Thus far, in confutation of the three

foregoing opinions, ſtated at the outſet of this propoſition.

I ſhall now add a few obſervations of my own, with reſpect to the infallibility which our commentators have thought proper to attach to the words of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 4, to the contradiction and ſubverſion of thoſe recorded by Moſes, Gen. xi. 26, and ſo conclude.

In the firſt place, I ſhall proceed to ſhew, that it is by no means certain that the words which Stephen uttered, verſe 4, were taken down exactly in the manner which he ſpoke them. For inſtance, it is probable he might have expreſſed himſelf thus; "And from thence he removed him, and "when his father was dead, came into this land "wherein ye now dwell." However that may be, one thing is certain, that if St. Stephen means to ſay that Abram, IMMEDIATELY after his father was dead, removed to the Plains of Mamre, that is, the Land of Hebron, or Land of Judea, I inſiſt he is wrong; for the firſt place he removed to is Sichem, ſee Gen. xii. 6. Then he removed further, and built an altar between Bethel and Hai, ſee xii. 8. and xiii. 4. From thence he removed ſouthward and went into Egypt, by reaſon of the famine being in the land, ſee xii. 10. He afterwards returned to Bethel, ſee xiii. 3. And then we read, xiii. 18 that he removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the Plains of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. So that there appears to have no leſs than about ſix years elapſed before he came to dwell in the Land

Land of Judea, which St. Stephen alludes to; he then dwelt there about 18 years; then he removed and ſojourned in Gerar, ſee xx. 1. and from thence he removed to Beerſheba, where it is ſaid, Gen. xxi. 33, 34, he planted a grove, and ſojourned in the Philiſtines' land many days: ſee Gen. xxii. 19.

The next matter we are informed of is Sarah's death, at what age ſhe DIED, and WHERE ſhe DID die, viz. Kirjath-arba, xxiii. 1, 2. Now it is not a little extraordinary, that we ſhould be ſo PARTICULARLY informed of the preciſe age at which Sarah died, ſhe being the only woman whoſe age is recorded in the Scriptures; alſo, ſo particularly of the place where ſhe died, viz. the very place where the Jews dwelt that Stephen was addreſſing himſelf to. And what is moſt extraordinary of all, is, that this ſhould be exactly 61 years after Abram's leaving Charron at the age of 75, at which time Sarah was juſt 66, ſee Gen. xvii. 17, 24. Conſequently, ſhe dying at the age of 127, (ſee xxiii. 1.) this muſt be exactly one year after the death of Terah, Abram's father, took place, who died at 205.

Obſerve, at this time, and upon this occaſion, ABRAHAM purchaſed a field and cave of the children of Heth; and, we are informed, xxiii. 17—19, that the ſame is Hebron. And it is not improbable, but that this is the very time St. Stephen might allude to, viz. when Abraham firſt purchaſed an inheritance in the Land of Judea, wherein the Jews then dwelt, that is, Hebron. And, as I hinted before, it is very poſſible (amidſt the noiſe and confuſion

that muſt have taken place on the occaſion) that the perſon who took down the words which St. Stephen uttered, might make ſome ſmall alteration; for, as I have obſerved already, it is poſſible St. Stephen might have expreſſed himſelf thus, Acts vii. 4, 'And from thence he removed, and, when his father was dead, came into THIS land wherein ye now dwell.'

I have not mentioned the foregoing obſervations, ſo much for the purpoſe of proving my propoſition, as with a view to make every candid and poſſible allowance in favour of the expreſſion of St. Stephen.

With reſpect to the infallibility which our commentators have thought proper to attach to the words of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 4, I beg leave to obſerve, that others of the apoſtles were alſo capable of erring, although poſſeſſed of equal abilities, and endowed with the Holy Ghoſt, as well as St. Stephen. I refer you to Gal. ii. 11, where it is ſaid, that Paul withſtood Peter to the face; and that for this reaſon, becauſe he, Peter, was to be blamed; ſetting forth in the 12th verſe why. And again, in the 13th, he further ſays, "inſomuch "that BARNABAS alſo was carried away with their "diſſimulation." And the error here in queſtion is, reſpecting a doctrinal point, of the utmoſt importance, ſee verſe 14 to the end. And that this is not the only inſtance of the fallibility of the apoſtles, I refer you to Acts xiii. 18—22, where the apoſtle Paul has been guilty of a ſimilar error to that which I lay to the charge of St. Stephen, if

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he meant to be underſtood that Terah was dead prior to Abram's leaving Charron at the age of 75: for, according to the account St. Paul there gives us, the period of time, between the Children of Iſrael leaving Egypt, and the laying the foundation of the temple, would be at leaſt 567 years, reckoning only 33 years for David's reign over all Iſrael; ſee 2 Sam. v. 5, and 1 Kings ii. 11. And if you take into the account the time that Samuel the prophet judged Iſrael, ſee Acts xiii. 20, it would be, according to the time allowed by our chronologiſts, juſt 31 years more, which would make the whole time 598 years: whereas the time recorded by Solomon and all Iſrael, 1 Kings vi. 1, is only 480 years. So that it is clear that Paul has erred in his calculation, at leaſt 87, if not 118 years.

What I would infer from the foregoing references, is, that if Peter and Barnabas were capable of erring, even in a doctrinal point; ſurely it cannot be deemed impoſſible but that Stephen alſo might miſconſtrue the paſſage, Gen. xi. 32, owing to not having ſufficiently compared what is recorded, Gen. xi. 26, with xii. 4. And that Paul alſo has been guilty of a ſimilar remiſſneſs, either of not having ſeen and noticed the words recorded on ſo publick an occaſion, as that of the laying the foundation of the temple, 1 Kings vi. 1, or elſe of not comparing that record with the different accounts laid down in Joſhua, Judges, Samuel, &c. from whence it ſeems moſt probable St. Paul gathered his information or computation.

If, notwithſtanding, it ſhould ſtill be inſiſted on, that the records of Stephen and Paul are, and muſt be deemed infallible, although contradictory to the teſtimony of Moſes, in the one inſtance, and Solomon and all Iſrael in the other; yet I muſt ſtill inſiſt, that BOTH the records of St. Paul and St. Stephen, are in themſelves inconcluſive, and inſufficient to anſwer the end which our commentators would require from them. For inſtance, St. Paul does not take upon him to aſcertain the exact period of time, but only ſays, ABOUT the ſpace of ſuch a time, ſee verſe 20, thereby implicitly acknowledging that he found himſelf at a loſs to point out the exact time. A proof this, that he either had not ſeen, or had not noticed the words recorded 1 Kings vi. 1. Nor are the words of St. Stephen more concluſive; for, admitting that Stephen means to ſay, that Terah was dead prior to Abram's leaving Charron at the age of 75, yet he by no means informs us how long he had been dead before; ONE YEAR, TWO YEARS, TEN YEARS, or TWENTY YEARS; which omiſſion will effectually break a maſter link in, and ſo deſtroy, the whole chain of the ſcripture chronology. For if Abram was not born at the time which Moſes ſays he was, viz. when Terah was 70; we are left utterly at a loſs to know the preciſe time when he, Abram, WAS born: it being equally as probable that he might be born when Terah was 140 or 150, as when he was 130.

From all the foregoing obſervations and conſiderations, I think there cannot remain a particle of

of doubt but that Moſes, Gen. xi. 26, means to inform us particularly at what age of Terah Abram was born; he being deſigned and ſet apart by the Almighty as the father of the faithful, alſo the father of Iſaac and Jacob, that is, ISRAEL, from whom God's peculiar people the Jews are deſcended. His being mentioned firſt, although youngeſt, is by way of preeminence; as in the caſe of Shem, on account of his being a progenitor of Chriſt, as man. Abram therefore being ordained of God for ſo illuſtrious a character, it would have been an extreme remiſſneſs indeed in Moſes, had he not informed us at what time he was born. And, as obſerved before, if he, Abram, was not born when Terah was 70, we are totally at a loſs to aſcertain when or at what time he was born.

Now after what has been advanced, I appeal to any perſon of penetration and candour, if it is not very poſſible, and that too without the leaſt impeachment of St. Stephen's character as an apoſtle, that he might miſconſtrue the paſſage under diſcuſſion. Nor indeed do I ſee why Stephen was not equally as liable to err with reſpect to the point in queſtion, as any other learned divine or inſpired chriſtian; for St. Paul himſelf ACKNOWLEDGES that he only knew in part, and propheſied in part, ſee 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12. The dilemma therefore ſtands preciſely thus; either Stephen or Moſes muſt certainly be wrong; and if Moſes, the error would be unpardonable in him: whereas St. Stephen might eaſily be miſtaken in the matter in queſtion, without any reflection on his veracity,

or qualification as an apoſtle. For, I beg it may be obſerved, he is not here DISCUSSING a CHRONOLOGICAL point; what he had in view was, to point out to the Jews the manifold mercies, and repeated inſtances of God's goodneſs to them as a people; and on the other hand, their rebellious conduct towards him, in return for all theſe his favours; the whole ultimately tending to ſet forth and convince them of this one ſingle point, viz. that they were no better than their forefathers, but, on the contrary, WORSE, for that they were the murderers of the Meſſiah, as the 51ſt and 52d verſes ſufficiently teſtify; ſo that the preſent point under diſcuſſion, viz. whether Terah, Abram's father, was, or was not dead, before Abram was called to leave Charron, is not at all eſſential to the ſubject which St. Stephen had in hand.

The matter in queſtion, therefore, is ſimply this, viz. whether Abram was born in the 70th year of Terah's age, or not. Now we are expreſsly informed by Moſes, Gen. xi. 26, that when Terah was 70 years old he had begotten THREE ſons, one of whom we are expreſsly told was ABRAM; who, although mentioned firſt, is on all hands allowed to be the youngeſt, as in the caſe of Shem, Gen. x. 2, 6, 21. And it has been already proved, that as it is a matter totally immaterial when either Ham or Japheth were begotten; ſo, for the ſame reaſon, it is totally immaterial to the ſubject Moſes had in hand, (viz. recording a divine chronology received from God) to inform us at what time either Nahor or Haran were born. This being

preciſely

preciſely the caſe, can any thing be plainer, than that Abram was born in the 70th year of his father's age? alſo that Abram was no more than 75 years old when he left Charron, at which time his father Terah could be only 145; conſequently could not then be dead, as we are informed that he died at the age of 205. If there needs further proof of this, Moſes takes care to furniſh it, for he poſitively informs us, in no leſs than three places, that Abram was required by God to leave his FATHER'S HOUSE; which I inſiſt would be an incorrect expreſſion had his father been dead; as it would then have been his brother Nahor's houſe, to all intents and purpoſes. The fact therefore is ſimply this; Abram left his father TERAH and brother NAHOR behind in Haran, where Terah dwelt and died 60 years afterwards, and where Nahor continued to dwell, ſee Gen. xxiv. 10, 15, and xxix. 4, 5. Now, as before obſerved, for Moſes to be ſuppoſed capable of erring in ſo many inſtances, would undermine the whole authority of all his five Books, as well as the divine authenticity of the Bible chronology. The records of Moſes in five inſtances are plain and poſitive; thoſe of Stephen, negative, contradictory, and inconcluſive; and I never yet underſtood that a negative expreſſion was ever allowed to invalidate or ſet aſide a poſitive aſſertion, where each of the perſons are entitled to an equal degree of credit. And let it be obſerved, Stephen was by no means a commentator or chronologiſt; Moſes was ſpecially ordained and appointed as ſuch; and in order

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to qualify him for that purpoſe, God even deigned to ſpeak with him face to face, as a man ſpeaketh unto his friend, ſee Exod. xxxiii. 11. Deut. xxxiv. 10. Numb. xii. 8. an idea infinitely too grand to admit a doubt of his veracity. See Numb. xii. 8.

I ſhall add no more to prove a thing which has never been diſproved, neither, I inſiſt, can be; and an attempt to do it, would be doing the greateſt violence to the ſcripture, as the Bible chronology now ſtands completely correct to the birth of Chriſt, as I ſhall prove in the courſe of this work in its proper place; but if this one link be broken, the whole will be thrown into confuſion.

Thus having, I truſt, proved that Abram was born in the 70th year of his father's age, and he left Charron at the age of 75, it follows, that our chronologiſts have over-reckoned that interval or period of time, juſt 60 years.

PROPOSITION II.

That our Commentators have put a premature and wrong Conſtruction upon the words of St Paul, Gal. iii. 17, viz. "That the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in "Chriſt, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot diſ- "annul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of no effect."

IN the courſe of the following diſquiſition, it is propoſed to clear up theſe five diſtinct points, relative to the above paſſage.

Firſt, That the firſt promiſe made to Abram, Gen. xii. 7, does not come under the deſcription of the promiſe or covenant above alluded to.

Secondly, That the covenant of circumciſion, the promiſe of Iſaac, the birth of Iſaac, &c. are only to be conſidered as ſo many promiſes, or earneſts of the promiſe, made to Abraham immediately after he had offered up Iſaac.

Thirdly, That altho' it was then made to Abraham in its fulleſt extent and ſpirituality, with reference to Chriſt, his ſpiritual ſeed, yet it was manifeſtly made in favour OF Iſaac; with whom it was alſo eſtabliſhed.

Fourthly, That although it was made in favour OF, and eſtabliſhed WITH Iſaac, yet it was nevertheleſs confirmed and ratified IN Jacob.

Fifthly, That St. Paul, without any kind of doubt, means to include the whole of the promiſes to Abram, Iſaac, and Jacob, but more eſpecially the

the laſt promiſe made to Jacob, that is, Iſrael, the very night before he entered Egypt.

Now with reſpect to this FIRST promiſe, ſo much inſiſted on, I think it may ſafely be inferred, that it was no more, at moſt, than a promiſe of that promiſe he afterwards received or obtained; for it is ſaid, Gen. xii. 1—3, "Now the Lord HAD ſaid "unto Abram, get thee out of thy country, and "from thy kindred, and from thy father's houſe, "unto a land that I will ſhew thee. And I will "make of thee a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, "and make thy name great; and thou ſhalt be a "bleſſing. And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, "and curſe him that curſeth thee, and in thee ſhall "all the families of the earth be bleſſed."

"Now the Lord HAD ſaid unto Abram," moſt probably intimated it to him in a dream, or viſion, SOME TIME (at leaſt) before this; as we are informed, verſe 7, "That the Lord APPEARED unto him, ABRAM, "and ſaid, Unto thy ſeed will I give "this land: and there builded he an altar unto the "Lord, who APPEARED unto him." Now I think it ſeems pretty clear, that this is the FIRST time which the Lord appeared unto him, as will be evidently ſeen from the 3d and 4th verſes of the xiii. chapter, at which time, let it be obſerved, he only promiſed him that hereafter he would give his ſeed the land;—and afterwards, Gen. xv. 5, he promiſed him that his SEED ſhould be as the ſtars of heaven, "and he believed the Lord; and it was "counted unto him for righteouſneſs. And he "ſaid unto him, I am the Lord, that brought "thee

" thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this " land, to inherit it." Here it is again obſervable, that this promiſe goes no farther than reſpecting the gift of the land; and that Abram underſtood it ſo, is evident from the reply he makes in the 8th verſe, ſaying, " Lord God, whereby ſhall I know that I ſhall inherit it?" &c. as alſo from *v.* 2, 3.

Obſerve further, that altho' it is ſaid, verſe 7, that God brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give him that land, yet he does not ſay at all, to thee DO I give this land, but only promiſes, that ſome time, in future, he would give it to his SEED, as is expreſſed, Gen. xiii. 15. It is true, it is ſaid in the 17th verſe, " Ariſe, walk thro' the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." But even THIS PROMISE, again, our commentators themſelves allow implies no more, than that he gave it to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, in full RIGHT, and to THEIR SEED in actual poſſeſſion. See note upon Gen. xxvi. 3. which alſo agrees with the aſſertion of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 5, 6, and with which I alſo agree, with only this material difference, or diſtinction, viz. that although he promiſed to give it to the ſeed of Abram, and to the ſeed of Iſaac, yet it was to the SEED of JACOB, in particular, that he gave it, in actual poſſeſſion. See Joſhua xxiv. 4, 11, 13, compared with iii. 7, 8, 9. And furthermore, obſerve, that all the foregoing promiſes only refer to, or ſpeak of, the giving of the land of Canaan to Abram's temporal ſeed, which temporal ſeed is Jacob, that is, Iſrael.

The covenant ſpoken of by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17, is

17, is not as yet entered into with Abram, nor does it take place, for as much as 50 years, at leaſt, after this firſt promiſe to Abram, Gen. xii. 2 and 3, ſo much dwelt upon, which totally deſtroys a maſter link in the chain of our commentators computation of the 430 years mentioned by St. Paul, reſpecting "the covenant, that was CONFIRMED before of God in, or with reſpect to) Chriſt; the law, which was 430 years after, cannot diſannul." Therefore it will inevitably follow, that if they are capable of erring as much as 50 years, it is equally poſſible they may err 500 years.

But it will probably be urged, That it is ſaid, to Abram, Gen. xii. 3, "in THEE ſhall all FAMILIES of the earth be bleſſed." And again, xviii. 18, latter part, "And all nations of the earth ſhall be bleſſed in him." Now I cannot ſee how either of theſe paſſages comprehends or contains any alluſion or ſpiritual reference to Chriſt, being both entirely confined to Abraham: unleſs it be inferred from the above paſſages, that Abram himſelf was that Chriſt which St. Paul refers to. An idea that no perſon will preſume to eſpouſe, much leſs attempt to ſupport; for, if it be taken in that ſenſe, all the ſubſequent promiſes to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, are not only quite ſuperfluous, but totally unintelligible. For obſerve, that to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14, it is ſaid, "that in HIS SEED ſhould all the families "of the earth be bleſſed." Now if they were bleſſed before in Abram, in the moſt extenſive and ſpiritual ſenſe, what further occaſion would there be for God's promiſing again to Jacob, "that IN HIM,

"and

"IN HIS SEED, they ſhould be bleſſed." My opinion is, that the expreſſion contained in the paſſages, implies no more, than that all families ſhould be bleſſed in Abram. So far as to have the benefit of his good example to imitate or copy after, he was in his life time a bleſſing to his friends and ſervants, who were inſtructed by him; and alſo to his poſterity, who were in a temporal ſenſe bleſſed for his ſake. See Gen. xvii. 20. and xxi. 13. In fine, he was made a bleſſing in his day to all perſons with whom he was connected. He was both a pattern and inſtrument of bleſſing to all around him, in this ſenſe of the expreſſion. It is generally underſtood, that the bleſſing derived by the poſterity of Abram, was far more than the advantage ariſing from his precept and example.

I come now to conſider ſecondly, That the covenant of circumciſion, the promiſe of Iſaac, birth of Iſaac, &c. are only to be conſidered as ſo many promiſes, or EARNESTS, of the ſpiritual promiſe of Chriſt, which God made to Abraham immediately after he had offered up Iſaac.

Mr. T. Prieſtley obſerves in his Bible, in a note upon Gen. xv. 13, that there was 430 years between the firſt promiſe, or, between the renewing and confirming of the promiſe by the gift of Iſaac, and Iſrael's going out of Egypt, the giving of the law, &c. alluded to by St. Paul. It is clear Mr. T. P. heſitates, which of theſe two periods to give the preference to, being, as it ſhould ſeem to me, conſcious that all was not right; and, as he doubted, he would have done wiſely to have been certain that both

both were not wrong, which I apprehend they are. The firſt, I truſt, has been proved ſo already, and the laſt, I truſt, will be.

For, if the words of St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17, may be ſuppoſed to have reference to any one covenant more than another; previous to the oath of the Almighty to Abraham immediately after he had offered up his ſon Iſaac as a type of Chriſt; certainly, the covenant of circumciſion entered into by God with Abram, Gen. xvii. 5, when he changed his name from Abram to ABRAHAM, ſee Gal. iii. 19, would claim a deciſive preference. But ſtill, obſerve, God ſays, the act of circumciſion ſhould only be a TOKEN of the covenant betwixt him and Abraham. But it was the promiſe of CHRIST, his ſpiritual ſeed, that was held out to Abraham, and underſtood BY HIM to be the only COVENANT, or means, whereby either he, or his faithful poſterity, could obtain ſalvation. And at the time he ordained the inſtitution of circumciſion, as a TOKEN of that covenant, ſee Gen. xvii. 11. and Acts vii. 8, God alſo changed his wife's name from Sarai to Sarah, *v.* 15, and ſaid, "Sarah, thy wife, ſhall bear thee a ſon INDEED, and thou ſhalt call his name Iſaac. And I WILL eſtabliſh my covenant with him for an everlaſting covenant, and with HIS SEED after him," *v.* 19, and again *v.* 21: "But my covenant will I eſtabliſh with Iſaac, whom Sarah ſhall bear unto thee at this ſet time in the next year." Here let it be obſerved, that the covenant ſpoken of to be made with Abraham, be it which it may, is made ſo as to be transferable from Abraham, and his ſeed in general,

general, to ISAAC in particular. And this idea is further illuſtrated by Iſaac's obedience in ſubmitting himſelf to be offered up by his father, as a type of Chriſt, who was alſo obedient to his father, and died for the ſins of the world.

But the principal point under diſcuſſion, and what I ſet out with to prove, is, at what time the firſt ſpiritual promiſe, which had reference to Chriſt the ſpiritual ſeed, was made. And that, I take it, was immediately after Iſaac had been offered up intentionally by his father. But Abraham being called to by the angel of the Lord to deſiſt from his purpoſe, and finding a ram there provided by God, he offered that up as a burnt offering inſtead of his ſon. And what renders it more remarkable is, that this circumſtance took place preciſely at exactly the half of the period from the creation of the world, to the crucifixion of Chriſt, upon that ſelf-ſame mount Moria: as will be hereafter clearly proved in the courſe of this work.

Therefore, as I ſaid before, I conſider the firſt promiſe to Abram, Gen. xii. 3, and all the ſubſequent promiſes, as alſo the covenant of circumciſion, in no other light, than as anticipations, or earneſts, of the above promiſe made to him, Gen. xxii. 18. If there were any thing further neceſſary to clear up this point, the very words of St. Paul himſelf, Gal. iii. 18, are abundantly deciſive. The words are, "God gave it to ABRAHAM by promiſe," not to ABRAM by promiſe; his name at the time of the firſt promiſe alluded to.

Thirdly, Altho' the promiſe in its fulleſt extent

and ſpirituality, with reference to Chriſt the ſpiritual ſeed, was FIRST made to ABRAHAM, Gen. xxii 18, yet it was manifeſtly THEN made in FAVOUR OF ISAAC, with whom it was alſo eſtabliſhed, xxvi. 4, in favour of his ſeed. But obſerve, it was confirmed and ratified IN Jacob, that is, Iſrael, and IN his ſeed, the twelve patriarchs in common.

It is ſaid, Gal. iii. 18, that God gave the inheritance to ABRAHAM by promiſe, that is, the ſpiritual inheritance, as well as the temporal. And as the promiſe of the temporal inheritance was given conditionally, ſo as to be transferrable, of courſe the promiſe of the ſpiritual inheritance was made transferrable alſo; therefore God eſtabliſhed it WITH ISAAC by promiſe, in favour of his ſeed, Gen. xxvi. 4, and that in the fulleſt, moſt extenſive, and ſpiritual ſenſe. And laſtly, and finally, he gave it to JACOB ALSO by promiſe, Gen. xxviii. 14, and even confirmed it IN him, IN fee as it were, (ſee Micah vii. 20, Luke i. 68, 72,) ſaying, "IN thee, and IN thy ſeed, ſhall all the families of the earth be bleſſed;" from whom it was never after transferred to any one of his children in particular, but remained an inheritance in common to all his ſeed, indiſcriminately, and in general, ſee Acts vii. 12, 15. Obſerve particularly, it is not ſo ſaid to Abraham nor Iſaac, meaning thereby that it was made to concentre IN him, JACOB, in FEE, from whom it ſhould no longer be transferrable to any particular perſon, till Chriſt his ſpiritual ſeed came; alſo in his temporal ſeed indiſcriminately for a joint poſſeſſion, not in favour of one to the rejection of another,

as

as in the caſe of Eſau, &c. Alſo it was from HIS, Jacob's, SEED, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, agreeable to God's promiſe TO HIM, that Chriſt came, in contradiſtinction to ESAU, although his elder brother, and a twin brother too; and conſequently, as much the ſeed of Iſaac as Jacob was, as St. Paul quotes, Rom. ix. 13, ſaying, as it is written, Mal. i. 2, 3, "JACOB have I loved, but ESAU have I hated." And moreover, as it was the particular ſeed of Jacob, in a temporal ſenſe, which firſt actually took poſſeſſion of the earthly Canaan, ſo it was the particular ſeed of Jacob, according to the fleſh, that firſt took poſſeſſion of the heavenly Canaan, or ſpiritual inheritance.

Obſerve, the words IN THEE are uſed to Jacob, to imply, that in him and his temporal ſeed, ſhould all families of the earth be bleſſed in a temporal ſenſe, in contradiſtinction to Eſau and his poſterity; and, in his SEED, that is, Chriſt, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, ſhould all the families of the earth be bleſſed; that is, all be ſaved through his vicarious atonement.

Obſerve further, the words IN THEE, are not uſed in either of the promiſes made to Abraham or Iſaac, except the firſt promiſe, or intimation to Abram, of the promiſes which followed, Gen. xii. 3, "in thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed;" that is, in the ſame ſenſe as in Jacob and his poſterity, ſhould all families of the earth be bleſſed in a temporal ſenſe. But it is further ſaid to Jacob, that in his SEED ſpiritual, which is Chriſt, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, ſhould all families of the

earth be bleſſed. It is ſaid, Gal. iii. 16, " to Abraham and his ſeed were the PROMISES made;" and again, verſe 21, " is the law then againſt the PROMISES?" Here he not only alludes to its being more than once made, but to more than one perſon. And in order to ſhew that this is not a forced or falſe conſtruction, I refer you to no leſs a proof than the words of God himſelf to Moſes, ſee Deut. xxxiv. 4; " This is the land which I ſware unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, ſaying, I will give it unto thy ſeed," that is, the ſeed of Jacob. See alſo Exod. vi. 3, 5, 8. iii. 6, 15. iv. 5; alſo Matt. xxii. 32, and Acts vii. 32. and elſewhere.

That Jacob himſelf underſtood the matter in queſtion in the ſame light as I repreſent it, ſee Gen. xlviii. 3, 4, 5, 16. And that God was in a ſpecial manner the God of Iſrael, ſee Gen. xxxiii. 20. That the covenant concentered in a ſpecial manner in Jacob, ſee Pſalm cv. 6, 9, 10, 11, 23 to 25. A proof alſo, that the Children of Iſrael, and they alone, were the perſons who went down into Egypt, and that Eſau and his poſterity were otherwiſe provided for in Mount Seir, ſee Deut. ii. 5, 12. That Jacob relied upon the laſt promiſe at Beerſheba, ſee Gen. xlviii. 21; and that Joſeph perfectly underſtood the ſame, ſee Gen. l. 24, 25.

There can be little doubt but that Paul, Gal. iii. 18, alludes primarily to the firſt ſpiritual promiſe made to Abraham, Gen. xxii. 18; but the grand matter in queſtion is, whether or not he does not include the ſubſequent promiſes made to Iſaac,

Iſaac, and Jacob alſo; for, ſurely, his firſt giving the promiſe of the inheritance in right to Abraham, in favour of his ſeed, does not preclude his having or retaining the right or privilege of renewing the promiſe of that gift to Iſaac, in favour of his ſeed: which identical promiſe, in its fulleſt extent and ſpirituality, was laſtly and finally confirmed IN Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 14, in favour of his ſeed in general; which word confirmed is uſed by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17. Therefore, the ſame covenant or promiſe, which St. Paul quotes as applicable to Chriſt in a ſpiritual ſenſe, may, with the ſtricteſt propriety, be applied to Jacob, that is, Iſrael, in a literal or temporal ſenſe, to the utter excluſion of all the other branches of the families of Abraham, or even Iſaac, from whom it was transferred by God himſelf in a ſpecial manner, to one of his two ſons, who were twins, and to the youngeſt of them, whom God himſelf confirmed in his right, by changing his name from Jacob, or ſupplanter, to Iſrael, Gen. xxxii. 28, ſaying, " for as a prince haſt thou power with God and with men, ſee Gen. xxvii. 36, and haſt prevailed," ſee Gen. xlix. 26. Therefore it follows, that Iſrael, and he alone, was the particular ſeed, in a temporal ſenſe, alluded to by the Almighty in his firſt promiſe to Abram, Gen. xii. 7. and alſo in all the ſubſequent promiſes; and that he and his children were the very ſeed referred to by the Almighty, Gen. xv. 13, " Who ſhould be a ſtranger in a land that is not theirs, and ſhould ſerve them, and be afflicted 400 years.

But leſt it ſhould yet be objected, that in the

laſt promiſe made to Iſrael the night before he entered Egypt, there is no immediate reference made to Chriſt his ſpiritual ſeed; I beg leave to obſerve, that although it is not expreſsly mentioned, yet it may nevertheleſs be alluded to or meant, inſomuch, that if Jacob entertained any fear or doubt, or was in any meaſure apprehenſive of God's not fulfilling his promiſe reſpecting the giving of the Land of Canaan to his temporal ſeed, which it is evidently clear that he did, from the words uſed by the Almighty, ſaying, "Fear not, &c." I ſay, in that caſe, he would alſo naturally doubt, whether he would make good his promiſe with regard to his ſpiritual ſeed, viz. Chriſt. And this is the more probable, as it is too often the caſe, even with the beſt of men, that they are more ſolicitous about their own or their children's temporal welfare, than they are of their ſpiritual benefit. But let it be obſerved, that God, by aſſuring him in the moſt expreſs and ſatisfactory manner, of his mindfulneſs to make good his promiſe in favour of his temporal ſeed, without the leaſt doubt, fully ſatisfied him, that he would alſo make good his promiſe reſpecting his ſpiritual ſeed; indeed, by convincing him of the one, the other he would of courſe believe: and I think there cannot be the leaſt doubt entertained, but that Jacob underſtood the meaning of the promiſe made to him, Gen. xxviii. 14, in its fulleſt extent and ſpirituality, viz. "IN THEE, AND IN THY SEED, SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED:" as much ſo as what Abraham did, Gen. xxii. 18, or Iſaac, xxvi. 4.

And

And that the promiſe in its fulleſt extent, ſpiritual as well as temporal, was laſtly and finally made to concentre in him, Jacob. And let it be particularly remarked, that the promiſe was made to the three, ſee Numb. xxxii. 11, and Levit. xxvi. 42; and that God did not make this promiſe, in its fulleſt extent and ſpirituality, more than once to each or either of them.

In ſhort, from what has been advanced, it appears quite a clear point, that the covenant alluded to by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17. is the ſame that was firſt promiſed to, or made with Abraham, renewed and eſtabliſhed with Iſaac, and was laſtly confirmed and ratified IN Jacob. Nay, further, I inſiſt, that the promiſes afterwards made to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 28, and xxxv. 9—13, (when God changed his name from Jacob, or ſupplanter, to Iſrael, that is, prevailer with God, ſee Hoſea xii. 3, 4;) are as much included in the covenant mentioned by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 15—17, as any of the promiſes; nay, even the laſt promiſe made to Jacob at Beer-ſheba, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4, the very night before he entered Egypt with his children, is equally as much referred to and included within the meaning of St. Paul, as any one of the promiſes made to Abraham, Iſaac, or Jacob, inſomuch that it was A promiſe, conſequently, one of thoſe ſpoken of by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 16, 21; and being the LAST, may with propriety be ſaid to be a CONFIRMATION of ALL the promiſes; and, as before obſerved, this was the very night before he entered Egypt with his children, where they ſojourned 430 years, ſee

Exod. xii. 40. And with this assertion will the words of St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17, perfectly agree, viz. that the Law was not given until 430 years after this last promise to Jacob the night before he entered Egypt; or, in other words, that there was 430 years clear between the confirming of the promises and the giving of the law. Which brings me now to the third Proposition, viz. That our commentators have been guilty of an error in their computation, respecting the stay of the Children of Israel in Egypt, of no less than 215 years.

PRO-

PROPOSITION III.

That there exiſts an error in the Computation of our received Chronology, of no leſs a magnitude than 215 years, under-reckoned, reſpecting the time allowed by our Chronologiſts, for the Stay of the Children of Iſrael in Egypt.

THE firſt paſſage that occurs, taking them in rotation, neceſſary to be diſcuſſed, relative to the above ſubject, we find in Gen. xv. 13—16, where the Almighty informs Abram as follows: "Know of a ſurety that thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger "in a land that is not THEIR'S, and ſhall SERVE "them; and they ſhall afflict them four hundred "years." Mr. T. Prieſtley, in a note upon this paſſage, aſſerts poſitively, that this account, or period of time, is to begin to be reckoned from the birth of Iſaac; but with what propriety I leave the reader to judge, after attending to the following remarks.

And firſt I beg it may be obſerved, that Iſaac was not a ſtranger in a land that was not his; unleſs it be inferred that he was a ſtranger in the land of his nativity, that is, the land of Canaan, in which he dwelt all his life time, except about eight years that he dwelt in Gerar, in the land of the Philiſtines. This being the caſe, I do not ſee how HE can with any propriety be ſaid to be a ſtranger in a land that was not his; as the land of Canaan was given in right

right both to his father and to him, and is moſt certainly the very land alluded to, or ſpoken of, in contradiſtinction to the land in which it is ſaid, that they, the ſeed of Abram, ſhould be a ſtranger, and ſhould be afflicted 400 years. Obſerve the words THEIR's and THEM, both in the plural number. Iſaac was but one, conſequently ſingular; and he lived as much as 60 years before he had any child; and after he had children he ſtill continued to dwell in his own native land, and rightful inheritance, till his death; and his ſon Jacob after him, till the age of 130, except 20 years which he ſerved Laban the Syrian, fourteen for his two wives, and ſix for cattle. See Gen. xxxi. 40, 41. Thus far, neither Iſaac nor Jacob can be ſaid to have been ſtrangers in a land that is not their's, be afflicted, &c.

Obſerve further, verſe 14, That it was to be a nation which they were to ſerve, and that for a continuance of 400 years of time. Jacob only ſerved a ſingle individual, viz. his uncle Laban, and that only 20 years for ſtated wages, not 400 years; and Iſaac, as was before obſerved, never ſerved any perſon at all. And obſerve ſtill further, verſe 15, That ſo far from this time of 400 years ſervitude, commencing with the birth of Iſaac, it is manifeſtly evident that it was not to commence till after Abram's death. The words are, "Thou ſhalt go "to thy fathers in PEACE; thou ſhalt be buried in "a good old age:" intimating clearly thereby, that none of theſe afflicting circumſtances ſhould take place during his life time, altho' the Almighty graciouſly deigned to inform him that he ſhould

live

live to a good old age; and he did live as much as 90 years after this time. But we are informed Gen. xlvi. 5—8, who the ſeed of Abram were, that the Almighty informed him ſhould be a ſtranger in a land that is not their's, that is, Egypt, ſhould ſerve them, and be afflicted of them 400 years; viz. the children of ISRAEL, who came into Egypt by reaſon of the famine, and were permitted by Pharaoh, at the requeſt of Joſeph, to dwell in the land of Goſhen: ſee Gen. xlvii. 27, 28: and there can be no doubt whatever, but that theſe are the very perſons alluded to, and ſpoken of, by Moſes, Exod. xii. 40, who ſojourned in Egypt, they, and their poſterity, 430 years.

If there needed further proof of this, the teſtimony of St. Stephen, Acts vii. 6—16, would eſtabliſh the point, viz. That the ſeed of Abram who were to be ſtrangers in a land that is not their's, were the children of Iſrael and their poſterity. If further proof be yet required, the words of the Almighty to Jacob, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4, the very night before he entered Egypt, would furniſh that proof. The words are, "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will alſo ſurely bring thee up again; and Joſeph ſhall put his hand on thine eyes;" intimating, by the laſt clauſe, that Jacob himſelf was not to expect to be brought up again in his life time, but that his poſterity ſhould certainly be brought UP again out of Egypt, which lies low, into the land of Canaan. It alſo goes to imply, that this is the firſt entrance of

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the ſeed of Abram into that land wherein they were to be ſtrangers, and to live in a ſtate of ſervitude and be afflicted 400 years.

But here occurs a ſeeming difficulty. It will probably be urged, If 400 years was the time appointed by the Almighty for the time of their ſtay in Egypt; how comes it to paſs that Moſes ſays, Exod. xii. 40, 41, that the time of their ſojourning there was 430 years? This ſeeming contradiction, at firſt ſight, I think may be reconciled, by one or other of the following obſervations:

In the firſt place, if we refer to Gen. xv. 14, latter part of the verſe, we may perceive, that the Almighty there ſpeaks in a qualified ſenſe, as when he ſpeaks of the age of man, Gen. vi. 3, he does not thereby imply, that none ſhould live beyond that age; for we are expreſsly informed that Abram himſelf, and many others, did live to a much greater age. The words are, "And AFTERWARD ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance." This was exactly verified, ſee Exod. iii. 21, and xii. 36, as to the ſubſtance. But obſerve, God does not ſay that they ſhall come out preciſely at the end of 400 years from their going in, but ſome time AFTERWARD; God, probably foreſeeing their perverſe and rebellious conduct, both with reſpect to himſelf and to Moſes, ſpake to Abram in a qualified ſenſe. He therefore might, if he ſaw it neceſſary, prolong or extend the time of their bondage 30 years longer than he at firſt purpoſed it to have been. And this might have been occaſioned by their perverſe conduct to Moſes, &c. when he firſt intimated to them

them, that the time of their deliverance drew nigh. See Acts vii. 17, 23, 30.

And as a further inſtance that this might be the caſe, we may refer to Numb. xiv. 21, to 24, to 36, but eſpecially verſes 22, 23, 33, 34, where their rebellious conduct is there aſſigned as the immediate cauſe of the then children's entrance into the land of Canaan being delayed 40 years longer than what it appears that God had intended, ſee *v.* 33: and their fathers, who had tempted and provoked God, were precluded from entering it at all; ſee *v.* 22, 23, except Joſhua and Caleb, ſee *v.* 30, and 38.

The above reaſons I deem perfectly ſatisfactory, but ſhall add another, which I think is equally probable, if not more ſo. There is every reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the firſt 30 years of their ſojourning there might or did elapſe, before the Egyptians began to make them ſerve, or cauſe them to be afflicted: and this is extremely probable, Joſeph being in ſo elevated a ſtation, and in ſuch very high favour with Pharoah, that it is not likely Joſeph would ſuffer them to be evil entreated, while that preſent Pharoah lived; but it is probable that he might die in the courſe of 30 years. If we conſult the teſtimony of Joſephus on this point we ſhall find it correſpond exactly with the above idea. See the beginning of the 9th chapter of his 2d book of the Antiquities of the Jews, where, ſpeaking of the conduct of the Egyptians towards the Hebrews on this occaſion, he expreſſes himſelf as follows; "They obliged them to labour in cutting canals "and drains, for conveying the waters from the "rivers; in raiſing dykes and banks, as defences

"againſt

" againſt inundations; in erecting walls round cities " and towns; in raiſing pyramids to a prodigious " height, &c. Their oppreſſors, ſays he, were ſo " watchful over them, that for the ſpace of about 400 " years,* their intervals from labour were ſo ſmall, " as ſcarcely to be ſufficient to recruit their ſtrength " and ſpirits after immoderate fatigue." How incomparably does this voluntary record, of one of their own nation, verify and confirm the expreſs words of God to Abram, Gen. xv. 13, " Know of a ſurety that thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land that is not their's, and they ſhall SERVE them, and they ſhall AFFLICT them 400 years: 14 verſe, and alſo that nation, whom they ſhall ſerve, will I judge: and afterwards ſhall they come out, &c."

Whatever degree of credit the writings of Joſephus, in general, may be entitled to, as to their authenticity and correctneſs, I ſhall not take upon me to determine; but I am decidedly of opinion, that this narrative is founded in truth; it being neither more nor leſs than a corroboration of the words of the Almighty as above quoted. Obſerve firſt, to what a nicety the time agrees; ſecondly, how well the account of their ſervitude and affliction correſponds with God's declaration to Abram. Then again, how literally it was fulfilled upon the Egyptians, viz. That nation will I judge, and afterward they ſhall come out with great ſubſtance; that is, after they had undergone a ſeries of ſervitude

* Joſephus mentions the ſame period of time, in the 11th chapter of his Hiſtory of the Wars of the Jews, when addreſſing himſelf to his countrymen, " He begged them to recollect their bondage in Egypt for 400 years."

tude under, and been afflicted by, the Egyptians 400 years. Obſerve, AFTERWARD, not until they had ſerved the full time ſpecified; which clearly goes to imply an excluſion from the land of Canaan, during that period or interval of time, viz. 400 years.

Verſe 16, "But in the fourth generation they ſhall come hither again;" that is, to the land of Canaan, where Abram then was, when God ſpake to him. This Mr. T. Prieſtley ſays, in his note on verſe 16, was verified or fulfilled, inſomuch that "Caleb and Eleazar were the fourth generation from "thoſe who left Canaan." But, I ſuppoſe, he muſt have forgotten this aſſertion, when, on a ſubſequent occaſion, viz. in a note on the firſt chapter of Exodus, he finds it neceſſary to have recourſe to as many as ten generations; and even thoſe will be proved, in its proper place, to be inſufficient to anſwer the purpoſe for which he introduces them. Therefore it is, and muſt be evident, that by the four generations here mentioned, the Almighty means ſomething more than four deſcents from father to ſon. For if this promiſe commenced at the ſame time as Mr. T. P. will have it the 400 years did, viz. at the birth of Iſaac, there muſt have been two generations paſt before THEY, the Children of Iſrael, went into Egypt; and then it follows, that there would be only two generations left, for them to multiply to the amazing number of about three millions; ſee note on Numb. ii. 32. This ſhews, or proves, to demonſtration, that the 400 years mentioned verſe 13, did not begin with the birth of Iſaac, otherwiſe, the firſt of the four generations muſt begin at the ſame time; for if

v. 16 be conſidered as alluding to the time of their going into Egypt, ſo muſt the 13th refer to the time of their ſtay there, both being ſpoken in the future tenſe. Conſequently it follows, that the four generations alluded to verſe 16, muſt begin at nearly the ſame time as the 400 years mentioned verſe 13; or, in other words, the 400 years of affliction muſt begin ſome time in the firſt generation; perhaps, as has been obſerved before, about 30 years after the firſt entrance of the Children of Iſrael into Egypt. Of courſe Mr. Prieſtley's aſſertion, that it began with the birth of Iſaac, is totally groundleſs and futile, and muſt be given up.

But, I clearly conceive, that by the four generations ſpoken of, verſe 16, we are to underſtand four complete, entire, diſtinct ages; ſee Gen. vi. 3. And then, reckoning the firſt of theſe to be Kohath, ſon to Levi the patriarch, who might be about 20 or 23 years old when he entered Egypt, where he died at the age of 133, Exod. vi. 18; I ſay, reckoning Kohath to be 23 years old when he entered Egypt, and then reckon the remainder of his life till he died, ſee Exod. vi. 18. we ſhall find it to be juſt 110 years. Then reckon the two next generations, or ſucceeding ages, at 120 each, according to Gen. vi. 3. which alſo agrees with the age Moſes died, ſee Deut. xxxiv. 7. Then add theſe three ages to the age of Moſes at the time he brought out the children of Iſrael, ſee Exod. vii. 7, viz. 80 years, we ſhall find that theſe four ages added together make exactly 430 years,

years; the time mentioned by Moſes, Exod. xii. 40, of their ſtay there.

Mr. T. Prieſtley, ſpeaking on this ſubject, in a note on Gen. xv. 13, obſerves upon this aſſertion of Moſes, which he refers and alludes to, and expreſſes himſelf as follows; "of which time, 430 "years, neither 405, nor yet 400, much leſs the "whole of the 430 years, were ſpent under Egyptian "perſecution." But here I beg it may be obſerved, in anſwer to Mr. P. that Moſes does not ſay this whole time was ſpent under perſecution; he only ſays, that they ſojourned there 430 years, and we well know that part of this time was ſpent without any perſecution; for inſtance, the firſt 17 years previous to the death of Jacob; and, moſt probably as much as 13 years after Jacob's death, ſo as to make up 30 years before they began to perſecute them, leaving 400 years afterward for their ſervitude and affliction, Gen. xv. 13.

Mr. T. Prieſtley further remarks, "for altho' the time ends with their parting thence, it did not begin with their coming thither; as it is ſaid (he obſerves) of Terah, that his days in Charron were 205 years, where Terah ſpent not all that time, but ended it." Here I beg it may be noticed, that it is not ſaid, Gen. xi. 32, that Terah's days in CHARRON were 205 years; but the words are theſe, "And the days of Terah were 205 years; and Terah died in Haran." Which words by no means imply that his days in Haran were 205 years, but only that it was in Haran he died at the age of 205. Good God! is the above the beſt,

and only reaſon, Mr. T. P. can aſſign, for poſitively contradicting, and giving the lie to Moſes, and aſſerting, that the 430 years he ſpeaks of, did not begin with the Children of Iſrael's entrance into Egypt; altho' Moſes, as emphatically as language can be expreſſed, ſays this time DID begin with their coming thither; inſomuch, that he affirms that the CHILDREN of ISRAEL ſojourned there, DWELT there, ALL that time. What has this VAGUE, FUTILE SHADOW of a reaſon, to do with invalidating the clear, diſtinct, poſitive, and unqualified aſſertion of Moſes, Exod. xii. 40, 41, which, I inſiſt, does ſtand unimpeached, either by Paul, Gal. iii. 17, or any other ſcripture teſtimony that ever has or can be produced, and is totally incapable of contradiction; neither have they the leaſt connection with, or reference to, the firſt promiſe, or any of the promiſes, but ſolely and ſimply, to the time of the ſtay of the Children of ISRAEL in Egypt. Not to the children of Abram, nor yet of ESAU the ſon of ISAAC, but abſtractedly, the Children of Iſrael, that is, the poſterity of Jacob; ſee Joſhua xxiv. 4. "I gave unto Iſaac, Jacob and Eſau; and I gave unto Eſau Mount Seir to poſſeſs it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt." See alſo Deut. xxvi. 5, and Pſalm cv. 23, 24.

I ſhall now quit the above ſubject for the preſent, as another paſſage preſents itſelf to my view, that requires ſolution, and which will take up ſome time in the diſcuſſion. The paſſage I allude to is in Exod. vi. 18—24. where there are only four

four deſcents repreſented to have taken place from Levi to Moſes. In conſidering this paſſage, I ſhall endeavour to compriſe the ſubject (although complicate) under three principal, general heads.

Firſt, I ſhall undertake to prove, that the Children of Iſrael were in Egypt more than four deſcents from father to ſon, &c. as apparently ſet forth in the above paſſage; and to which conſtruction all our commentators have given their aſſent, viz. that Eleazar, Aaron's ſon, was the fourth deſcendant from Kohath; as alſo, Aaron, Moſes, and Korah, from Levi the patriarch.

Secondly, that the Children of Iſrael muſt have been in Egypt more than 215 years, the time allowed by our commentators and chronologiſts for their ſtay there: and,

Thirdly, I ſhall undertake to make it appear, that the Children of ISRAEL actually were there the full time which Moſes, Exod. xii. 40, ſays they were, viz. 430 years, to a day.

Firſt, in conſidering this paſſage, let us have recourſe to, or notice, the manner of expreſſion uſed by Moſes on this occaſion, *v.* 25, Theſe are the HEADS of their FATHERS' HOUSES; ſee alſo Numb. iii. 30, and numberleſs other paſſages of ſimilar expreſſions, to the ſame or the like purport. From which peculiar mode of expreſſion, I am led to think, that Moſes does not mean to convey the idea, that theſe are literally ALL the deſcents or branches of the families, but only the CHIEFS or HEADS of them, as in 1 Chron. xxiii. 9, 11, 17; where we may obſerve, that there is an obvious

 diſtinction

diſtinction given, or applied to ſome of the fathers, as being called or deemed CHIEFS, &c. And it clearly ſtrikes me, that while theſe CHIEFS, or HEADS of the families lived, all their younger poſterity were in general called by, or after their name, and reckoned as their own immediate family; as much ſo as if they were their own begotten children. And in order to ſhew that they themſelves occaſionally conſtrued theſe paſſages in this light, I refer to Gen. xlvi. 12 with 15, alſo 17 with 18, ditto 19 to 21 with 22, and all with *v.* 26; where it is pointedly ſet forth, that the grandchild was as much deemed the grandfather's child, as his own begotten and immediate children. Nay, they are even deemed the children of the grandmother; ſee *v.* 15, 18, 22, and 25. For a further proof of this I refer to Gen. xxxi. 43; where we may obſerve, that Laban, Jacob's father in law, calls all Jacob's children HIS, LABAN'S, own children. And again, Laban himſelf is called, Gen. xxix. 5, the ſon of Nahor; although it is certain that he was his grandſon; ſee Gen. xxv. 20, and xxviii. 2. See alſo 1 Chron. xxiii. 15, 16, where it is ſaid, that the ſons of Moſes were Gerſhom and Eleazar, and that, of the ſons of Gerſhom, SHEBUEL was the CHIEF; ſee 1 Chron. xxiv. 20, where this Shebuel is alſo called ſon to Amram. And this ſame Shebuel, we are informed 1 Chron. xxvi. 24, was ruler of the treaſuries in the time of David; which is upwards of 400 years from Moſes, or even Gerſhom his ſon's time, ſee 1 Kings, vi. 1. Then obſerve again, 1 Chron. xxvi. 25, 26, where Shelomith,

Shelomith, who was over all the treaſures of the dedicated things, is ſet forth in *v.* 25, as the FIFTH in deſcent from Eleazar, own brother to Gerſhom, both ſons of Moſes, as before ſtated.

But more particularly obſerve, Luke iii. 32, 33, that Aaron's wife, ſee Exod. vi. 23, was evidently the ſixth generation at leaſt from Juda; tho' Aaron himſelf is repreſented, Exod. vi. 16 to 21, as only the fourth. But a ſtill more deciſive paſſage occurs in Matt. i. 3, 4, compared with 5, 6, where it is very clearly ſet forth, that there are ſix deſcents from Judah to Naſſon, brother to Aaron's wife, and there are only ſix more ſet forth from Naſſon to Solomon, who laid the foundation of the temple 480 years after. See 1 Kings, vi. 1. Therefore, why not allow the firſt ſix deſcents to comprize, or take up 430 years, as well as allow the laſt ſix deſcents to have taken up 480 years? which is admitted.

But if it ſtill be inſiſted on, that Aaron, Moſes, and Korah, are to be literally and bona fide conſidered the grand-children of the patriarch Levi, &c. and that the Jochebed mentioned Exod. vi. 20, was the immediate mother of Aaron and Moſes; and alſo, actually the IMMEDIATE daughter of the patriarch Levi; then I will admit, and it will and muſt appear, that 430 years could not poſſibly tranſpire from the entrance of the great-grandfathers into Egypt, to the departure of the great-grandchildren out of Egypt, at the age of 83 and 80 years, the ages of Aaron and Moſes. See Exod. vii. 7. But, if I miſtake not, the matter conſidered in this light, will ſerve to confirm my preſent purpoſe, viz. that

according to this ſtatement, there could not poſſibly two hundred and 15 years have tranſpired; for ſuppoſing Kohath, Levi's ſon, to be 23 years old when he came into Egypt, which it plainly appears muſt have been the caſe, if not more, for two of his couſins, viz. Pharez and Beriah, had TWO children each, ſee Gen. xlvi. 12, 17. Then ſuppoſe Kohath to beget Amram the eldeſt of his ſons, ſee Exod. vi. 18, at the age of 50; then ſuppoſe again, that Amram ſhould beget Moſes, his youngeſt ſon, at the advanced age of 90 years; yet there is manifeſtly a deficiency of as much as 19 years to complete the 215 years, which all our commentators allow them to have been there.

But if this ſtatement be deemed unſatisfactory, let us have recourſe to others. Suppoſe Levi to have begotten Jochebed, at the advanced age of 90 years; and again, that Jochebed bare Moſes at the advanced age of 80 years; yet this will not complete the time by ten years or more, viz. 215 years, allowed them to have been there. But if neither of the above ſtatements do yet give ſatisfaction, let us try a third. Suppoſe for a moment, Aaron and Moſes's immediate father to be that Amram, the brother of Izher, Hebron, and Uzziel, ſet forth Exod. vi. 18, we are told he had BUT TWO ſons, viz. Aaron and Moſes. And we are informed, Exod. vi. 23, that Aaron had but four ſons, two of whom died childleſs, ſee Lev. x. 1, 2, alſo Num. xxvi. 61. And that Moſes had but two ſons; ſee Exod. xviii. 3, 4, and 1 Chron. xxiii. 15—18. and it does not appear that theſe two ſons of Moſes had more than one ſon each; ſee alſo 1 Chron. xxiii. 16, 17.

16, 17. Neither does it appear that thoſe of Aaron, viz. Eleazar and Ithamar, had any more, viz. Eleazar had Phineas, ſee Exod. vi. 25. Whether Ithamar had more than one ſon, I cannot ſay, but one he muſt have had, ſee 1 Chron. xxiv. 4. However, it clearly appears, that the whole two families of Aaron and Moſes, themſelves inclūded, did not amount to 20 ſons, to Amram, nor does it appear they were any more than 12 in all; viz. Aaron and Moſes, ſix ſons, and four grandſons.

Let us try further. His brother Izher, we are told, Exod. vi. 21, had not more than three ſons, and one of them had no more than three ſons. See verſe 24. Suppoſe the other two to have ſeven ſons, this will only make ten between the three; and it will take at leaſt ſixty years out of ninety, the moſt that can be allowed, to produce theſe; and ſuppoſe theſe to have five ſons each yet then they will only amount to ſixty three perſons. Uzziel we are alſo informed had no more than three ſons, Exod. vi. 22, and ſuppoſe him to have had theſe three by the time he was 30 years old; then again ſuppoſe them to have five ſons each by the ſame age; and then again theſe fifteen to have five ſons each by the ſame age, viz. 30 years old: the whole family, all put together, does not amount to more than 93 perſons. Suppoſe again, Hebron to have had five ſons by the time he was 30 years of age; and theſe five to have five each in 30 years more; and again thoſe 25 to have five ſons each in 30 years more; his whole family at this rate, will be only 155 perſons. In ſhort, the whole of the four fami-

lies put all together, amounts to no more than 323 males, in 90 years, the greateſt time that can poſſibly be allowed, being ſeven years more than the age of Aaron, the eldeſt ſon of the eldeſt brother. Whereas the amount of theſe four families ſpecified in Num. iii. 27, 28, is no leſs than 8,600. And obſerve further, that the tribe of Levi did not multiply in a miraculous manner is evident, for altho' he had three ſons, viz. Gerſhom, Kohath, and Merari, yet all the families of theſe three, conjointly, amounted to no more, including children of a month old, than 22,300. See Num. iii. 22, 28, 34. Whereas the tribe of Dan amounted to no leſs than 62,700 men of war, from twenty years old and upwards; although he had only one ſon, and no more; ſee Gen. xlvi. 23. and alſo Num. xxvi. 42: which proves to a demonſtration, that nothing but a long extent of time can poſſibly reconcile theſe matters.

Beſides, were it neceſſary to advance any further arguments to prove that Moſes's father could not be that Amram, the brother of Izher, &c. it may eaſily be effected by referring to Exod. ii. 1, where it ſays, that there went a MAN of the HOUSE of Levi, and took to wife A daughter of Levi. Obſerve, Korah and his family are alſo called SONS of Levi, Numb. xvi. 8. But here it is obſervable, that neither the name of the MAN nor of the WOMAN is mentioned, as it is in Exod. vi. 20, and Num. xxvi. 59, but, notwithſtanding, it appears they were both of the tribe of Levi. It is further ſaid, verſe 2, that THE WOMAN conceived and bare a ſon. Here again

again is no name of the woman MENTIONED, nor does Moſes particularize who this woman was, any further than that ſhe was A daughter of Levi, (that is of the tribe of Levi) as the man is ſaid to be of the houſe of Levi, but no name mentioned: and the MAN at leaſt, if not the woman, was without doubt deſcended in a direct line from AMRAM, the brother of Izher, Hebron, and Uzziel, by Jochebed his wife, A daughter of Levi, in the ſenſe as above mentioned. Thus may Moſes and Aaron be ſaid to be ſons to them, in the ſame manner as Laban, as was obſerved before, is ſaid to be ſon to Nahor, tho' his grandſon. And let it be further obſerved, theſe two verſes are evidently a continuation of the ſubject contained and related in the firſt chapter, which alludes to the great length of the time of their ſtay, as well as the extreme rigour of their oppreſſion when in Egypt. Whereas in all the other places Moſes only gives a general account of the chiefs of the heads of the fathers of the families, &c.

Having, I truſt, ſubſtantiated the firſt propoſition, beyond the poſſibility of contradiction, I proceed now to the ſecond, viz. that the Children of Iſrael were in Egypt a longer time than our commentators allow them to have been, viz. 215 years.

We are informed, Exod. i. 5, that they were 70 perſons or ſouls who came out of the loins of Jacob. But it is very evident, from the 46th chapter of Geneſis throughout, particularly the 26th and 27th verſes, and Deut. x. 22, that Jacob himſelf, alſo Joſeph and his two ſons, are included in this number,

ber, but not his ſons wives. We are then informed, *v.* 6, that Joſeph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. In *v.* 7th we are further informed, that the Children of Iſrael multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty, ſo that the Land of Egypt was filled with them. What! and all this to take place in the ſmall ſpace of 70 years, as it is ſet forth in the margin of the Bible? For the whole country to be filled with the progeny of 40 perſons, and that in 70 years, I confeſs is to me unaccountable. But let us conſider the above paſſage a little more minutely. It is ſaid that Joſeph died before all theſe circumſtances took place. Now it is eaſy to prove that Joſeph LIVED as much as 70 years, if not 71, after his brethren came into Egypt, as will appear by comparing Gen. xli. 29, 31, with *v.* 46, 53, 54, and all with xlv. 6: from which paſſages it is evident, that Joſeph was no more than 39 years of age when he told his brethren that the famine had five years yet to continue. But perhaps he might be 40 at the time of their going down with their father Iſrael and all their families; at any rate he could not be more than 40; and we find, Gen. l. 26, that he died at the age of an 110. But obſerve the expreſſion, Joſeph died, AND ALL HIS BRETHREN. Now that ſome of his brethren were living when HE DIED, is clear from Gen. l. 24. What time they all died we are at a loſs to aſcertain. But LEVI, we are told Exod. vi. 16, died at the advanced age of 137; and that LEVI was no more than about four years older than Joſeph, will

appear

appear by comparing Gen. xxix. 34, with xxx. 3—24. Therefore Levi muſt have lived in Egypt at leaſt 93 years; conſequently, the DATE in the margin of the Bible, oppoſite to the 6th and 7th verſes of the firſt chapter of Exodus, muſt begin 23 years too ſoon.

But obſerve further, it is ſaid, Joſeph died, and all his brethren, AND ALL THAT GENERATION. It appears very clear to me, that by the laſt clauſe of the verſe it is meant to be underſtood, that ALL WERE DEAD who came down into Egypt; and if ſo, then KOHATH, Levi's ſon, muſt be dead alſo before the time here ſpoken of, and he died at the age of 133. Purſuant to this idea, our chronologiſts muſt have miſcalculated at leaſt 40 years. Beſides, there were ſome who came down into Egypt much younger than Kohath, viz. Jacob's great-grandchildren, being the ſons of Pharez and Beriah, ſee Gen. xlvi. 12, 17. It appears, however, that ALL were dead before this time; and from the deſcription here given of their great number and magnitude, viz. that they filled the whole Land of Egypt, I ſhould conceive they muſt HAVE BEEN dead LONG before the time here alluded to, or allowed.

But to purſue the ſubject: *v.* 8, ſays, "Now there aroſe up a new king over Egypt, which KNEW not Joſeph." *v.* 9, "And he ſaid unto his people, Behold! the people of the Children of Iſrael are MORE and MIGHTIER than we," the Egyptians; and there are only 44 years more allowed by our chronologiſts till all this happened, viz.

viz. 114 years from their entrance; and we have already ſhewn that Kohath, or ſome of his brethren, or nephews, who came firſt down into Egypt, muſt be alive as long as 114 years: and therefore, if this new king which aroſe up had no knowledge or remembrance of Joſeph, ſurely they might have informed him of all the great ſervices Joſeph had rendered to their anceſtors. But, as obſerved before, the great myſtery lies here, viz. how it is poſſible that the Children of Iſrael ſhould multiply from 40 perſons, in 114 years time, to be more in NUMBER, as well as MIGHTIER, than the Egyptians: for in that period of time, even admitting them to multiply agreeable to the following ſtatement of Mr. T. Prieſtley, copied from a note of his on Exod. i. they would not amount to 14,000 perſons, and nearly 10,000 of them would be of the deſcription of thoſe which Moſes deems children, viz. all thoſe under 20 years of age; then there will not quite 4,700 remain that can be deemed men, &c. and theſe would not be more than the inhabitants of a ſmall county in England; whereas Egypt is repreſented as an exceeding fruitful country, of no leſs extent than 550 miles in length, and 125 in breadth; nay, they would not be more than the inhabitants of a ſmall city; whereas Egypt is ſaid to contain ſome thouſands of large cities, &c. therefore this number, ſurely, could not be more than ALL the Egyptians. Yet it is ſaid by this new king, that at this time they were not only more in number, but alſo MIGHTIER, than the Egyptians: although we are informed, that about 100 years after this

this the Egyptians could collect an army, and that on the ſhorteſt notice, conſiſting of no leſs than 600 chariots, 5,000 cavalry, and 200,000 infantry,* to purſue the Children of Iſrael in the wilderneſs of the Red Sea, in which the whole army of the Egyptians were drowned, and their arms caſt aſhore for the future uſe of the Children of Iſrael.† Obſerve, this circumſtance, viz. the largeneſs of the Egyptian army on this occaſion, does abundantly ſerve to prove, that at the time of this new king's advancement to the throne, the Children of Iſrael muſt have been in Egypt more than 114 years, or even 214. It is alſo evident, that St. Stephen underſtood it in this light, from his manner of expreſſing himſelf, where he makes reference to this very time; ſee Acts vii. 17—20. "But when "the time of the promiſe drew nigh, which God "had ſworn to Abram, (Gen. xv. 13.) the peo-"ple grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another "king aroſe, that knew not Joſeph." Here obſerve, Stephen ſays, that when the time of the promiſe DREW NIGH; which would be a very unintelligible and injudicious expreſſion, if he ONLY meant thereby to convey the idea, that only 114 years had elapſed out of 215, the time our chronologiſts allow them to have been there, that then, and therefore, the time of the promiſe drew nigh, although there was an 100 years or more of the time unexpired, which was nearly the half. But it appears evident to me, that he means to have himſelf underſtood, that when three fourths of the time ſpoken of by himſelf in the 6th verſe had tranſpired, that

* See Joſephus's Antiquities of the Jews, B. ii. ch. 3. † Ibid ch. 4.

that THEN the time of the promiſe may be ſaid to draw nigh; there being not quite a fourth part remaining, when this new king aroſe that knew not Joſeph, and which Stephen goes on and ſays, dealt ſubtilly with their fathers, and evil intreated them, ſo that they caſt out their young children, to the end they might not live; ſee Exodus i. 10, to 19, 22. Mr. T. Prieſtley conceives that a revolution took place in Egypt at this time, which he ſays was ſoon after the death of Jacob; and the expreſſion "knew not Joſeph," means REGARDED him not. By which conſtruction it appears that Mr. T. Prieſtley is of opinion, that when this new king came to the throne Joſeph was living; and IF HE WAS, I think the king muſt needs know him, by reaſon that he preſided over all the king's treaſures, and managed all his affairs; ſee ch. xli. 38—44; even according to Joſeph's word, were all the people ruled, and in the throne ONLY, the King is ſaid to reſerve a pre-eminence: he gave him his ring off his own finger, made him ride in the ſecond chariot which he had, and they cried before him Bow the knee; and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt, ſo that without him, Joſeph, ſhould no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt, ſee Gen. xlvii. 14—27, particularly *v.* 23. So that if Joſeph was alive, as Mr. P. ſuppoſes, whether this new king was of the ſame lineage, or of another family, certain it is that he could not help KNOWING Joſeph, nor, I ſhould think, help REGARDING him neither. But this is all idle conjecture, for we are expreſsly told in the next verſe but one before, that prior to this

this new king's coming to the throne, Joſeph DIED, AND ALL HIS BRETHREN, and ALL THAT GENERATION.

Joſephus, the Jewiſh hiſtorian, aſſerts expreſsly, that another family came to the throne at this time of the new king, &c. but differs materially with Mr. P. reſpecting Joſeph's being alive. Joſephus ſays, that after the deceaſe of Joſeph his brethren lived happily in Egypt many years: but, that in proceſs of time the Egyptians, being naturally indolent, peeviſh, moroſe, and malicious in their temper, abandoned to ſenſual gratification, avaricious, and envious in the extreme, the TIME CAME that the former ſervices of Joſeph were no longer remembered. That the powers of the ſovereignty being transferred FROM the family of the former king, THEN they treated the Iſraelites rather as ſlaves and enemies, than as free people and friends; for they compelled them to ſubmit to the moſt laborious and ſervile offices, and were continually exerciſing their inventions to diſcover new methods of harraſſing, and oppreſſing them, &c.

But to return to my ſubject. Mr. T. Prieſtley, in a note on Exod. i. reſpecting the very point in diſcuſſion, ſays, "allowing the grandſons of Iſrael to be fifty perſons, (which I admit for the preſent to be a fair ſtatement,) and each of theſe 50 perſons to begin to beget children at 20 years old; then each of them beget only three children: (I ſuppoſe he muſt mean SONS, tho' he does not ſay ſo, otherwiſe he would be terribly out, indeed, in his calculation:) but we will ſuppoſe that he means three

SONS

sons each, then ſuppoſe them all to live, marry at 20, and beget three ſons each; and ſo on in like manner for ten generations, viz. in the firſt 20 years of 50 come 150; of them in the ſecond 450; third 1350; fourth 4050; fifth 12,150; ſixth 36,450; of the ſeventh come 109,350; eighth 388,050; ninth 984,150; tenth 2,952,450. By ſuch a fair calculation as this, he ſays, the apparent difficulty ſoon vaniſhes." But I, for one, beg leave to differ in opinion with Mr. P. and conſider his whole ſtatement, even the outſet, as liable to ſeveral very great objections.

In the firſt place, their number will be reduced from 50 to 40, if we only deduct the ſons of Levi not reckoned by Moſes, and thoſe others who died without iſſue; viz. one of Simeon's, viz. Ohad; one of Aſher's; viz. Iſhua; and five of Benjamin's. See Gen. xlvi. 10, 17, 21, with Num. xxvi. 12, 38, 39, 44. Secondly, There is not the leaſt reaſon to believe, or conclude, that they uſually married ſo young as at 20 years old, either prior to their going into Egypt, or previous to their coming out from thence. AT WHICH TIME EVEN MOSES evidently deems them CHILDREN, Num. i. 45, at that age or under. Obſerve, Aaron, tho' 83 years old, had only four ſons and two grandſons, viz. Phineas, ſee Exod. vi. 25, and 1 Chron. xxiv. 4; and two of his SONS died without iſſue, ſee Lev. x. 2, Num. iii. 4, &c. viz. Nadab and Abihu. Obſerve further, theſe two, being the elder brothers, muſt have been more than 30 years old, ſee Num. iv. 3, as their younger brothers, after their death, officiated in the office of

of prieſts. From this it is evident they did not all marry ſo young as 20. For admitting thoſe who DIED for offering ſtrange fire before the Lord to be 40 years old, their father Aaron muſt have been MORE than 40 when he begat them.

Again, Moſes, tho' 80, had only TWO ſons, Exod. xviii. 3, 4, not three: and to appearance, only two grandſons, 1 Chron. xxiii. 16, 17, inſtead of nine, and that theſe grandſons were not born at this time, viz. the time of their leaving Egypt, is evident; ſee Exod. iv. 20, 25. Here is no account of more than four grandſons both to Aaron and Moſes; whereas, according to Mr. Prieſtley's ſtatement or hypotheſis, they ſhould have had great-great-grandchildren at their ages, to the number of 162. But admitting for a moment, that they DID all marry at 20, it does not ſurely follow, that they are to have three ſons each at 20 alſo. For it will be admitted beyond diſpute, that in order to their multiplying, it muſt be neceſſary for them to have ſome daughters as well as ſons, and undoubtedly an equal number of each, or nearly ſo; and then it will appear that they muſt have been 25 or 26 years old before the youngeſt ſon was born: and at leaſt 21, if not 22, when the firſt was born; which will, on the average, render and augment the time from 200 years, as reckoned by Mr. Prieſtley, to 215 years. This conſidered, Mr. Prieſtley has not a year to ſpare. Moreover, THEN there is no time allowed for the propagation of the younger children; which will require 40 to 50 years more. The fabric of courſe muſt then fall,

as baſeleſs and viſionary: beſides, were it admitted that his ſtatement comes within the bounds of probability, and alſo within the time allowed him, 215 years; yet he cannot ſurely include the tenth generation in competition with the computation of Moſes, ſtated Numb. i. 45, 46, which are all men of war from 20 years old and upwards: then the amount of his eighth and ninth generations, (inadmiſſible and improbable as it is) will not exceed that of Moſes, ſtated Numb. ii. 32, little more than one third, after the proportionable deduction for the tribe of Levi, which is reckoned by Mr. Prieſtley, but not by Moſes; (ſee Numb. iii. 15,) and alſo thoſe already proved to have died without iſſue; when he will have only 40 left to reckon from.*

But in order to demonſtrate ſtill further, that Mr. Prieſtley has not ſtudied this matter ſo much as, I think, he ſhould have done, before he aſſented with the reſt to give the lie to Moſes; I beg leave to call his attention to the following ſtatements. In the firſt place, if he will only detach from his ſtatement the particular tribes or ſons of Gad

* The author, in applying the foregoing calculations, has taken it for granted, that Mr. T. P. meant the grandſons of Iſrael only. But it is poſſible that he might mean to include the great-grandſons alſo, viz. Heber and Malchiel, the ſons of Beriah, and Hezron and Hamul, the ſons of Pharez: Gen xlvi. 12, 17, in which caſe it will increaſe the number to calculate from; tho' even THEN, he does not ſee how they AND their fathers can be reckoned. Be that as it may, it is totally immaterial to the point he wiſhes to call the readers attention to, viz. the increaſe of the particular tribes of Joſeph and Dan; that being the principal and ſole hinge on which he begs leave to ground his argument.

Gad and Benjamin, together with thoſe of LEVI, (which, as before obſerved, cannot be admitted into the calculation,) and thoſe who died without iſſue, his number then will be reduced from 50 to 28 perſons to calculate from; which will produce no more than 796,068 men, between the three laſt generations added together; viz. the 7th, 8th, and ninth, &c. which will not be much above a third more than the number recorded by Moſes, AFTER deducting the number of the two above tribes therefrom, viz. Gad and Benjamin. The amount of the ten tribes which remain will be THEN 522,500. And by purſuing the ſame mode of calculation, it will clearly appear, that it will not produce more, reckoning three generations, than three fourths of the number of the tribe of Manaſſeh, (Numb. i. 35.) but little more than two thirds of the number of the tribe of Ephraim, (*v.* 33) and little more than one third of the number of the tribe of Dan, ſpecified verſe 39.

Thus we ſee both the inconſiſtency, AND inſufficiency, of Mr. T. Prieſtley's hyperbolical hypotheſis. For inſtance; by calculating according to his hypotheſis, the tribe of Dan, abſtractedly, who had no more than ONE ſon, ſee Numb. xxvi. 42, 43, will not amount to more than 27,431, including three generations, viz. the 7th, 8th, and 9th added together. Whereas the number of the tribe of Dan, ſpecified by Moſes, Numb. i. 39, was no leſs than 62,700, all men of war, from 20 years old and upwards. Beſides, if it were neceſſary to advance or produce any further poof of the unwarrantableneſs of Mr. T. Prieſtley's hypotheſis, it may eaſily

be done, by only continuing or purſuing his adopted mode of calculation two generations further, and the erroneouſneſs, and ridiculouſneſs thereof, will moſt evidently and ſtrikingly appear. For obſerve, by the continuance of which, the 10th, and 11th generations, (not to include the 12th being children, as before obſerved,) will amount to no leſs a number than 11,809,800; which will be more than eight times the number of the 7th, 8th, and 9th generations added together, and more than ten times the number of the 8th and 9th generations only. Whereas the children of Iſrael, when numbered after the plague, Numb. xxvi. 51, which was 39 years afterwards, that is, from their former numbering, Numb. i. 46, were 1800 leſs than before, tho' there muſt have been, within a year, of two of Mr. P.'s generations entire, viz. 10th and 11th, to have been numbered then: (according to Mr. Prieſtley's hypotheſis,) leaving the 12th for the then children. And that none of thoſe, who come under the deſcription of the three laſt of theſe ſuppoſed generations, were deſtroyed in the wilderneſs, is evident, ſee Numb. xiv. 31, 37, 38, and xxvi. 11, and Deut. i. 38, 39.

And in order further to prove the unwarrantableneſs of his hypotheſis, I beg leave to refer to the age of the twelve patriarchs, at the time they all came into Egypt; the youngeſt of them, (except Benjamin) was Joſeph, and he, it has been proved, was 40 years old, and all the other ten were of courſe older; yet, notwithſtanding they were all, except one, 40 and upwards, there were only two, out of

fifty

fifty of their ſons, which had children, namely, Pharez, the ſon of Judah, and Beriah the ſon of Aſher, ſee Gen. xlvi. 12, 17. So that theſe 11 patriarchs, tho' all of them 40 and upwards, had only four grandſons; whereas, according to Mr. Prieſtley's hypotheſis, they ought to have had above an 100 at that time, and at their age. This proves to demonſtration, that they had not generally children ſo young as 20, at the time of their entrance into Egypt.

Obſerve further, Phineas, grandſon to Aaron, could not be more than 10 years old at the time of their coming out of Egypt; ALTHO' Aaron was 83, as Phineas ſerved in the prieſthood 39 years afterwards; ſee Numb. xxxi. 6, with x. 8; and they never officiated in that office after they were advanced to 50, ſee Numb. iv. 3, viii. 24, 25. Should there ſtill be ANY ſo perverſe, as to maintain, that the whole number ſpecified by Moſes, Numb. i. 46, as alſo the tribes of Joſeph and Dan, conſidered abſtractedly, were propagated within 215 years, I hope at leaſt they will admit, that the children of Iſrael were not, nay could not be, brought out of Egypt again in the 4th generation or deſcent from father to ſon, as Mr. P. in another place aſſerts; ſee his note in the margin upon Gen. xv. 16, where he ſays, Eleazar and Caleb were the fourth generation from thoſe who left Canaan. This being admitted, will effectually ſerve my purpoſe, viz. to break the grand link in this chain of errors, and pave the way for the introduction of the third thing propoſed to be proved, viz. that the children of Iſrael were

in Egypt the full time that Moſes ſays they were, viz. 430 years, Exod. xii. 40.

And in the firſt place, in order to effect this, let us ſee if we cannot comprize the matter within the bounds of probability, which is certainly more than can be allowed Mr. T. Prieſtley's calculation; and to this effect I will make IT ſubſervient to my preſent purpoſe. For inſtance, allowing, or ſuppoſing, the 40 grandſons of Iſrael which lived to have iſſue, to marry on an average at 30, being younger than thoſe ſet forth in Gen. xi. 11—25. (not to ſay any thing of the age of Terah, Abram, Iſaac, and Jacob, when THEY married and begat children); and that each of thoſe 40, between that age and 60, ſhould beget three ſons and three daughters, who ſhould all be ſuppoſed to LIVE, marry, and have children; for ſuppoſing them to have five ſons and five daughters born to each perſon, yet it will be great odds againſt three of each living to marry, and alſo have as many children. That this is nothing more than a fair ſtatement, I refer to the five ſons of Judah, two of whom died in the Land of Canaan, ſee Gen. xlvi. 12; alſo to the ſons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, two out of four died childleſs, although paſt 30 years old, ſee Numb. iii. 4, and the other two had only one ſon each; but more eſpecially to the ten ſons of Benjamin, Gen. xlvi. 21, only five of whom had children; ſee Numb. xxvi. 38, 39. But leſt it ſhould be inferred from this, that by his having five that lived to have children, it might be a frequent or general caſe, I refer to the number

of

of his tribe at the time of their going out of Egypt, Numb. i. 37, which is the ſmalleſt of all, or either of the tribes there numbered, except that of Manaſſeh, which is only half of the tribe of Joſeph, his brother Ephraim being the other half: ſee verſes 32, 33, 35.

Again; Gad's tribe, although he had ſeven ſons, and EACH of thoſe had children, ſee Numb. xxvi. 15, 16, 17, yet his tribe was not ſo numerous at the time of their coming out of Egypt as the tribe of Dan, who had only one ſon; and very few more than the tribe of Ephraim, which was only half the tribe of Joſeph; ſee Numb. i. 25, 39, 33; the other half being Manaſſeh, ſee *v.* 35. Circumſtances theſe, which in my opinion, go a great way towards proving the great length of time which they muſt have been in Egypt, and which alone ſeems to afford the moſt probable, if not the only means, of reconciling ſuch apparent improbabilities.

But to return to the point, viz. that each of theſe 40 perſons ſhall be ſuppoſed to marry at 30 years old, and by the age of 60 have three ſons to live to marry and have children; and again each of theſe ſons to marry at 30, and have the ſame number of children by 60; and ſo on for the ten generations: then, taking 45 for the average, tho' perhaps many of them did not marry ſo young even as that, (for inſtance Moſes, who was not married till after he left Egypt, and he was then 40) but taking the average at 45 years to produce each generation, and ſo on for the nine, will make

405 years. THEN the amount of the number produced by Mr. Prieſtley's mode of calculation, (which, though in ſome reſpects it is too many, yet in others has been proved deficient) will in a great meaſure appear reconcileable to probability, and alſo to the number ſtated by Moſes to have come out of Egypt, Numb. i. 46, eſpecially when it is conſidered, that the five years which will remain over and above, after allowing 20 for the then deemed children, in the tenth generation, will be little enough to allow for the great deficiency which muſt have been occaſioned by their great oppreſſion; the deſtruction occaſioned by their children being thrown into the Nile, and otherwiſe murdered, perhaps for ſeveral years, and to the amount of many thouſands; and alſo the deficiency which that would further occaſion to the ſucceeding generations of their ſuppoſed progeny; ſee Exod. i. alſo ii. 2—5.

But it is by no means neceſſary to prove, that the number ſpecified by Moſes, Numb. i. 46. ſhould exactly correſpond with the number produced by Mr. Prieſtley's mode of calculation; it is quite ſufficient for me to ſhew, that there is a much greater degree of probability annexed to MY ſtatement than what there is to HIS. Alſo that mine is founded upon precedent as well as probability; his on NEITHER. And although the number which is produced by Mr. Prieſtley's ſtatement from 40 perſons, will be rather above one third more than thoſe ſtated by Moſes, Numb. i. 46, if we reckon a generation and half, viz. thoſe from

from 20 years old to 65, and half the former generation, yet this will by no means invalidate my ſtatement; by reaſon, if we only detach from the above calculation the three tribes of GAD, SIMEON, and BENJAMIN, which, by the bye, are not a fourth of the number of the whole 12 tribes, ſtated Numb. i. 46, the number then left to calculate from will be reduced from 40 to 23 perſons, which will produce no more than 452,709 from the age of 20 to 65. And if we add to that the half of the preceding generation, they will not amount to more than 528,160. Whereas the number of the other nine tribes, or indeed but eight, (reckoning Joſeph only one) reckoned by Moſes, Numb. i. 46, after deducting the number of the three above tribes, viz. Gad, Simeon, and Benjamin therefrom, will be 522,500. Upon this average you will obſerve, the time correſponds within five years, allowing 20 for the then children, and the two numbers correſpond within one hundredth part, even calling Joſeph two tribes, which is in both caſes ſurpriſingly near indeed.

But obſerve further, thoſe under 20, who were deemed children, could not be quite the half of the then riſing generation, rendered by this time, viz. the tenth generation, totally promiſcuous, ſo as to require 45 years, the average time allowed, to complete the generation; I ſay, allowing thoſe under 20, which is leſs than the half of the riſing generation, to be from 350 to 400,000; and then again allow the one third of thoſe to be old enough to marry and have two ſons each, that would come under the de-

deſcription of thoſe who were numbered the ſecond time by Moſes, viz. 39 years after, when it appears they were 1800 fewer than before; which deficiency is, by the above mode of calculation, reaſonably accounted for, when it is conſidered that there is one year ſhort of 40, and that all thoſe of 59 years old and upwards were deſtroyed in the wilderneſs, except Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun. See Deut. ii. 14, 15. Thus, we ſee, the numbers taken account of at both times, are by my mode of caclculation, or hypotheſis, made to agree and correſpond to a nicety: whereas, according to that of Mr. T. Prieſtley, they would or ſhould have amounted to TEN times the former number.

Here obſerve, that by only having recourſe to a propoſition, which is in itſelf every way probable and reaſonable, I have removed thoſe mighty obſtructions, or ſtumbling blocks, which have operated as obſtacles to prevent the learned and wiſe of ſo many ages, and ſo many thouſand years, viz. above 3,300, from comprehending the ſenſe and meaning of as plain a paſſage as any one in the Bible, from the beginning to the end thereof; viz. "that the ſojourning of the Children of ISRAEL, WHO DWELT in Egypt, was 430 years to a day."

I proceed now to comprize the ſum and ſubſtance of the foregoing diſquiſitions, contained in this, and the preceding propoſition, by recapitulating the moſt eſſential points, on which I conceive the main argument principally hinges: all

of

of which, I truſt, have been unequivocally, and incontrovertibly cleared up.

Firſt, That the covenant ſpoken of by St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17, is ſo far from referring particularly to the firſt promiſe made to Abram, Gen. xii. 3, 4, that it does not allude to it at all; that being no more than an intimation or promiſe of that covenant which God made with ABRAHAM, not with Abram. Neither is it the covenant of circumciſion made with ABRAHAM, that St. Paul alludes to; as IT had no immediate reference to Chriſt, and is termed by the Almighty, as only a TOKEN of that covenant; but the covenant which St. Paul alludes to, is certainly that which was firſt entered into with Abraham, with reſpect to the promiſe of Chriſt his ſpiritual ſeed; and this was immediately after he had offered up his ſon Iſaac, as a type of Chriſt; which covenant, THEN made in favour of Iſaac, was afterwards renewed and eſtabliſhed WITH ISAAC in favour of his ſeed; and laſtly, was ratified and confirmed IN Jacob, and IN his ſeed, to the utter excluſion of ESAU and his ſeed, although Iſaac's firſt born ſon; and that Paul, by uſing the word promiſes, means thereby to comprehend ALL the promiſes to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and as ſuch to include the LAST promiſe made to Jacob, the night before he entered Egypt. See Heb. xi. 9. And, without the leaſt doubt, Paul had his eye upon this laſt promiſe, and conſiders it as the final cloſe of all the promiſes; alſo that Paul muſt have got his information as to the period of time, from the words

words recorded by Moſes, Exod. xii. 40, 41, or I know not from whence he was to get it; for he himſelf acknowledges that he only knew in part, and propheſied in part; ſee 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12: and as to Moſes, there cannot be the leaſt doubt, but that he received his information immediately from God himſelf. And with this idea the words of the apoſtle will perfectly coincide, viz. "The covenant that was confirmed before of God, (with reſpect to Chriſt,) the law, which was not till 430 years after, cannot diſannul," that is, not till 430 years AFTER the confirmation of the covenant, by this laſt promiſe made to Jacob the very night before he entered Egypt. Obſerve, the paſſover alſo was in the night, even at midnight, when the Lord ſmote all the firſt born of the Egyptians. See Exod. xii. 29.

Secondly, That the 400 years of ſervitude and affliction, mentioned Gen. xv. 13, did not begin with the birth of Iſaac, as erroneouſly ſet forth; but that it moſt probably DID begin about 30 years after the firſt entrance of Iſrael and his children into Egypt; and that the four generations mentioned in *v.* 16, does not literally mean only four deſcents from father to ſon, but that it does mean four entire, complete, diſtinct, ſucceſſive ages. Gen. vi. 3. Exod. i. 6.

Thirdly, That the genealogy ſtated, Exod. vi. 16, 18, 20, cannot be underſtood to be all literally correct; as it is certain, from proof poſitive, that Moſes could not be the immediate SON of AMRAM, the brother of Izher, Hebron, and Uzziel: and that

that ſo far from their having been there only four deſcents from father to ſon, as there ſtated, it has been proved that double the number of deſcents would be inſufficient to produce the number which went out.

Fourthly, That they muſt have been there MORE than 215 years, the time allowed by our chronologiſts, to produce their number at going out.

Fifthly and laſtly, That the children of Iſrael certainly were there, that is, in Egypt, the whole of the time which Moſes ſays they were, viz. 430 years.

It certainly muſt be evident, as I have obſerved before, from the words of the Almighty to Jacob, at Beerſheba, the very night before he entered Egypt, that this is the time of the firſt entrance. The words are, "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will THERE make of THEE a great nation." Now Beerſheba, Mr. P. obſerves, was the ready way from Egypt to Canaan, and the utmoſt part of the Land of Canaan ſouthward towards Egypt; ſo that the children of Iſrael would enter Egypt immediately in the morning. How exactly does this circumſtance verify the words of Moſes, and at the ſame time alſo ſerves to corroborate them with thoſe of St. Paul, for it is ſaid, Exod. xii. 41, "And it came to paſs at the end of the 430 years, even the SELF SAME DAY it came to paſs, that all the HOSTS of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." And who theſe hoſts of the Lord were, we are told in the preceding verſe, viz. the CHILD-

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REN OF ISRAEL; and who theſe CHILDREN OF ISRAEL were, we may ſee, Acts vii. 14, 15, viz. the CHILDREN or poſterity of JACOB; ſee alſo Exod. xix. 3, Numb. xxiv. 5, 17, 19; xxiii. 7, 10, 21, 23; Deut. xxxii. 8, 9; Pſalm lxxviii. 5; alſo Pſalm cv. 6, 9—11, 23; cxxxv. 4, and cxlvii. 19; Iſai. xli. 8; xlii. 24, xliii. 1; xliv. 1, 5, 21, 23; alſo xlviii. 1; Ezek. xxviii. 25; Iſa. xlv. 4, alſo 2 Kings xvii. 34: thus we may clearly perceive, that by the expreſſion CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, Moſes means none other than the CHILDREN, or houſe of JACOB.

How admirably do the foregoing references ſerve to confirm and eſtabliſh, beyond the poſſibility of diſpute, the preciſe meaning of the words recorded by Moſes, Exod. xii. 40.

If it ſhould ſtill be contended that I have not yet proved that the children of Iſrael were in Egypt all this time, viz. 430 years; I anſwer, that the aſſertions of Moſes, Exod. xii. 40, 41, are of themſelves, without any aſſiſtance from me, very abundant proof, and have never been contradicted by any ſcriptural authority; that they ſtand, and ever will ſtand, unimpeached; and appear as a monument, to vindicate the ability and veracity of Moſes, and at the ſame time ſerve to perpetuate the ſhame and diſgrace to all generations of thoſe commentators, who would dare, without better authority, to contradict the poſitive aſſertion of Moſes, the Man of God. They alſo ſtand as a bulwark againſt any proof that can, or MAY YET be attempted to be advanced to the contrary, by any preſumptuous commentators, who may dare attempt to pervert

vert the explicit, plain words of Moſes. But before they engage in ſo preſumptuous an undertaking, I recommend it to them to read the 8th verſe of the 12th chapter of Numbers, and there ſee the recorded teſtimony of God himſelf concerning him.

And now, I truſt, I may ſafely infer, that ſhould there yet be any perſons, who ſhall heſitate to admit that I have completely proved my preſent propoſition, viz. that there actually is an error in the computation of our chronologiſts, reſpecting the time of the ſtay of the children of Iſrael in Egypt, of 215 years; they muſt at the ſame time be under the neceſſity of denying that there is either truth in ſcripture, meaning in words, or concluſion in logick. There being only 215 years allowed, inſtead of 430, it conſequently muſt be under-reckoned 215 years.

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PROPOSITION IV.

I come now to my fourth propoſition; but before I enter upon particulars, it will be neceſſary here to exhibit, at one view, the whole chain of ſcripture chronology, from the birth of Abram to the return of the Jews from their ſeventy years captivity.

	Years.	*References.*
Year of the world when Abram was born	1948,	agrees with Gen. xi. 26.
Abraham's age at the birth of Iſaac	100,	ſee Gen. xxi. 5.
Iſaac's age at the birth of Jacob	60,	ditto xxv. 26.
Jacob's age when he went into Egypt	130,	ditto xlvii. 9.
Stay of the children of Iſrael in Egypt	430,	ditto Exod. xii. 40, 41.
From their leaving Egypt to the building of the temple	480,	ditto 1 Kings vi. 1.
Solomon reigned afterwards	36,	ditto 2 Chron. ix. 30.
Rehoboam reigned	17,	ditto ditto xii. 13.
Abijah ditto	3,	ditto ditto xiii. 2.
Aſa ditto	41,	ditto ditto xvi. 13.
Jehoſhaphat ditto	25,	ditto ditto xx. 31.
Jehoram ditto	8,	ditto ditto xxi. 5.
Ahaziah ditto	1,	ditto ditto xxii. 2.
Queen Athaliah ditto	6,	ditto ditto xxii. 12.
Joaſh ditto	40,	ditto ditto xxiv. 1.
Amaziah ditto	29,	ditto ditto xxv. 1.
Uzziah ditto	52,	ditto ditto xxvi. 3.
Jotham ditto	16,	ditto ditto xxvii. 1.
Ahaz ditto	16,	ditto ditto xxviii. 1.
Hezekiah ditto	29,	ditto ditto xxix. 1.
Manaſſeh ditto	55,	ditto ditto xxxiii. 1.
Ammon ditto	2,	ditto ditto xxxiii. 21.
Joſiah ditto	31,	ditto ditto xxxiv. 1.
Jehoiakim ditto	11,	ditto ditto xxxvi. 5.
Nebuchadnezzar after the beginning of the captivity	37,	2K. xxv. 17. Jer. xlii. 31.
Evil Merodach ditto	11,	The 70 yrs. of captivity.
Belſhazzar ditto	22,	2 Chron. ſee xxxvi. 21.
	3636,	age of the world in the 1ſt year of Cyrus.

I proceed now to ſhew,

That there are FIVE ſmall errors, amounting in all to 13 years, under-reckoned in the Chronology, from the time of laying the foundation of the Temple to the Return of the Jews from their Captivity in Babylon, in the firſt year of Cyrus.

	Years.	*References.*
The firſt error that occurs, if we refer to the dates in the margin of the Bible, we ſhall find is of - -	- 3	See 2 Chron. xxi. 1, and 20. five years allowed inſtead of eight years.
The ſecond error is of -	- 1	ditto xxii. 2, totally omitted.
The third error is of -	- 1	ditto xxv. 1, and 28, only 28 allowed inſtead of 29 years.
The fourth error is alſo of	- 1	ditto xxix. 1, with xxxii. 33.
The fifth error is of -	- 7	Compare date oppoſite xxxvi. 9, with 22; only 63 years allowed inſtead of 70 years.
Under reckoned in all years	13	

The laſt error, conſiſting of ſeven years, is occaſioned by a miſcalculation of the time of the captivity, or rather, as appears, the commencement of it. And in order to ſet this matter in its proper light, I ſhall firſt proceed to aſcertain at what time the captivity of Judah did commence, which was when Jehoiachin was carried away to Babylon; ſee 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, 10. And that it was at that particular time it began, and no other, I refer for proof to 2 Kings xxv. 27. alſo to Jer. lii. 31. alſo to Ezek. xxxiii. 21, and xl. 1.

Obſerve, with reſpect to the two firſt of the

above references, that the 37th year of their captivity, was alſo the laſt year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and the firſt year of Evil Merodach's. And obſerve further, it was in the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign that Jehoiachin was carried by him captive to Babylon: he carried away the treaſures of the houſe of the Lord, and of the king's houſe, and cut in pieces all the veſſels of gold, which Solomon king of Iſrael had made in the houſe of the Lord; ſee 2 Kings xxiv. 12 to 17. With repect to the two laſt references, viz. xxxiii. 21, xl. 1, they plainly and clearly corroborate the two former, viz. that the five and twentieth year of their captivity, was the 14th year after the city was ſmitten; and it is quite evident that the city was ſmitten in the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign: ſee 2 Kings xxv. 8, 9, alſo 2 Chron. xxxvi. 19; Jer. lii. 12, 13, 14, being juſt 11 years after Jehoiachin was carried captive to Babylon, as before obſerved. And that the reigns of Evil Merodach and Belſhazzar are ſtrictly correct, I refer to 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22, alſo Jerem. xxv. 11. Our chronologiſts note, in the margin oppoſite Jer. xxv. 11, that their captivity is to be reckoned from the 606th year before Chriſt, which is juſt ſeven years previous to their being carried away captive in the reign of Jehoiachin, which, according to their own calculation, is only 599 years before Chriſt; ſee the date in the margin oppoſite 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9: conſequently, they have committed an obvious error in beginning, or dating the commencement of the captivity 7 years too ſoon. Obſerve further, this will in other reſpects ſerve to confirm

confirm what was hinted above, viz. that the time of the reign of Evil Merodach and Belſhazzar are ſtrictly correct.

Furthermore, in order to ſhew that there are only the five errors I have noticed, and neither more or leſs, (except two ſmall omiſſions of three months each, too trivial to mention, ſee xxxvi. 2, ditto 9) in the period of time ſtated in the beginning of this propoſition, viz. from the foundation of the temple to the return of the Jews from their 70 years captivity in Babylon; compare the dates in the margin, at the two different periods, and we ſhall find that there is only 475 years allowed; whereas according to my ſtatement at the beginning of this propoſition (which ſtatement I pronounce incontrovertible) there ought to have been 488: conſequently, our received chronology, during that period, is under-reckoned juſt 13 years. Thus have I proved my fourth propoſition.

PROPOSITION V.

That there is a further Error, in the Computation of our Chronologiſts, from the firſt year of Cyrus, to the birth of Chriſt, of as much as 53 years, over-reckoned during that Period.

THE paſſage I refer to, for proof of the above, is the following, Dan. ix. 25, "Know therefore, and underſtand, that from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, unto the Meſſiah the Prince, ſhall be ſeven weeks, and threeſcore and two weeks."

The firſt point which I ſhall proceed to conſider, is, what we are to underſtand by the above expreſſion of 7 weeks and 62 weeks; which indicate, or imply, the interval of time which was to intervene between the one period and the other, viz. between the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, and the coming of the Meſſiah the Prince.

The above period I believe is unanimouſly allowed by all commentators, to imply a time of 483 years; there being juſt ſo many days in 69 weeks; and, that a DAY in ſcripture language is often put for a year, and a week for ſeven years, I refer you to Numb. xiv. 34, alſo to Ezek. iv. 5, 6: and again, "thou ſhalt number ſeven ſabbaths," that is, 49 years, to the year of Jubilee.

But before I enter into further particulars on the

the ſubject, I think it neceſſary to quote the opinion and remarks of the late Rev. JOB ORTON.* In treating on this paſſage, in a ſermon on Daniel's Weeks, vol. vi. page 270, he ſays, A week is put for ſeven years, and 70 weeks for ſeven times 70 years, that is, 490 years; and then he ſays, this is to comprehend the whole period between the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, and the DEATH of Chriſt; and he further ſays, that the commandment here referred to, is the commandment or grant to Ezra for reſtoring the church and ſtate of the Jews; for THAT, he THINKS, is meant by the expreſſion of reſtoring and building Jeruſalem, &c. And for this, he ſays, the command was GRANTED to Ezra, by Artaxerxes king of Perſia, in the ſeventh year of his reign, and from that time to the death of Chriſt was exactly 490 years to a month. He then proceeds to ſay, that this whole period is afterwards divided into three, that is, ſeven weeks, 62 weeks, and one week. From this decree to the Meſſiah the Prince, or, as he ſays, to the firſt publication of his goſpel, ſhould be ſeven weeks and 62 weeks; in the firſt ſeven weeks, or 49 years, the ſtreets ſhould be built again, and the wall even in troublous times. Now, ſays he, from the beginning of this reſtoration by Ezra, to the ending and perfecting of it by Nehemiah, was exactly 49 years. Howbeit I ſhould have been glad he would have told us how he proves it, as I do not ſee it.

* Mr. ORTON's "Expoſition on the Old Teſtament, with devotional and practical Reflections, for the uſe of Families," was publiſhed ſo lately as 1791, in 6 vols. 8vo. to which there are upwards of 900 ſubſcribers.

The ſecond period, he ſays, was from the end of that time to the end of 62 weeks, or 434 years, and then Meſſiah the Prince was to appear; that is, he ſays, his goſpel was to be opened upon the world by John Baptiſt: adding, the law and the prophets were till John, and that he began to preach juſt 69 weeks after Ezra's decree, that is, 483 years. Then, he ſays, John Baptiſt preached three years and a half, and Meſſiah preached three years and a half more; and theſe two put together make ſeven years, the laſt week of the prophecy. He then ſays, Indeed it is ſaid, *v.* 26, "After 62 weeks ſhall Meſſiah be cut off." But, he ſays, the word AFTER muſt refer to the whole next week, otherwiſe no time would be left for his miniſtry. And in *v.* 24, the events to be brought to paſs by his death are placed at the end of the 70 weeks. Upon the whole, he ſays, the firſt period of 49 years, refers to reſtoring the church and ſtate of the Jews; the ſecond period, 62 weeks, reaches from the end of that period to the publication of the goſpel; the laſt week, from John's preaching to Chriſt's being cut off; which was one week, or ſeven years. All theſe put together, he ſays, make up the 70 weeks, or 490 years. And, according to this computation, every particular hath been exactly verified, and the whole number of years anſwers to a month. Other computations have been made by learned men, but this appears to be the moſt exact and ſatisfactory. Then he ſays, there are difficulties attending every computation, ariſing from the different names, number, and years, of the Perſian kings; and the

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different lengths of years in different nations, &c.

Now I cannot help acknowledging, that I find myſelf extremely obliged to Mr. ORTON for this laſt obſervation, viz. that there is little or no dependance to be placed upon theſe different hiſtories, at leaſt with any degree of certainty. As I have no opportunity of availing myſelf of their information, ſuch as it is, I ſhall requeſt the ſame indulgence from the public, which Mr. ORTON ſeems to claim with RESPECT TO HISTORY.

Without entering into a minute detail on all Mr. Orton's remarks, let it ſuffice to ſay, that I differ from him in the following particulars.

Firſt, I affirm, that the 70 weeks mentioned verſe 24, did commence one week or ſeven years before the 69 weeks mentioned verſe 25: and not that it ended one week AFTER the 69 weeks, as Mr. Orton will have it.

Secondly, I contend, that the 69 weeks, mentioned verſe 25, refer to, or imply the period of time from the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, to the BIRTH of Chriſt, or Meſſias.

Thirdly, that the 62 weeks mentioned verſe 26, are to begin to be reckoned from the time of the completion of the temple by Nehemiah, as Mr. Orton ſays, but with this material difference; he ſays, to the publication of Chriſt's goſpel by John: I ſay, to the DEATH of Chriſt.

Fourthly, I contend, that altho' it is probable the one week mentioned verſe 27, may bear the conſtruction Mr. Orton puts upon it, yet I inſiſt

that it is a matter totally distinct from either the 69 weeks or the 70 weeks.

Fifthly, and principally, I affirm, that the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, &c. alluded to in verse 25, took place in the first year of CYRUS king of Persia; and NOT in the seventh year of ARTAXERXES king of Persia, as Mr. Orton sets forth.

First, that the 70 weeks DID or MUST begin one week before the 69 weeks, I refer to the time of Daniel's vision, when he HAD this information from the angel Gabriel, which was in the first year of Darius, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans, see verse 1; and that this was previous to the first year of Cyrus, when the 69 weeks commenced, I refer to Dan. i. 21, and vi. 28: and altho' our commentators only allow it to be two years before the reign of Cyrus, yet I am well convinced that it must have been seven years. Howbeit, it is possible that the determination might have taken place in the purpose of the Almighty some years before Daniel received this information of it by Gabriel. Be that as it may, certain it is, that Mr. Orton is wrong, when he says that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, are to be comprehended as the period from the going forth of the commandment to restore, &c. to the Messiah the Prince; for we are expressly informed, *v.* 25, that it was to be only 69 weeks: consequently, he must inevitably be wrong in that idea.

Secondly, I proceed to shew that the 69 weeks mentioned Daniel ix. 25, refer to the BIRTH of Christ, the Messiah, not to his death. In order

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the better to form our judgment on this point, let us have recourſe to other predictions, or prophecies, of ſimilar import, relative to the ſame great event; and we ſhall find that they all centre in the ſame point, viz. the BIRTH of Chriſt. The firſt paſſage I ſhall allude to is in Gen. xlix. 10, where it is ſaid, "The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."

Now is it not well known, that the children of Judah had preſerved diſtinct, thro' three ſucceſſive empires, viz. the Chaldean, Perſian and Grecian, and even the Roman ſo far, a GOVERNOR and high prieſt, of the regal line, TILL the BIRTH or coming of Chriſt; at which time Herod was made governor. Scarcely had the Meſſiah appeared in the fleſh, when Judea was altogether reduced into a Roman province, having no ſovereign but the Roman emperor. Therefore, I truſt, it will be allowed, that THIS paſſage refers to the BIRTH of Chriſt; ſee alſo Iſaiah vii. 14, "Behold a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon." &c. Alſo ix. 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, &c." It certainly will be allowed, that theſe two paſſages ALSO refer to the BIRTH of Chriſt. But in order to put the matter totally beyond the poſſibility of a diſpute, I refer to the united teſtimony of both men and angels, proving that to be the time or event alluded to; ſee Matt. ii. 2—12. alſo Luke ii. 8—15. And now, I truſt, it will readily be allowed, that this is the time or great

event

event referred to by Dan. ix. 25; and not to the commencement of John the Baptiſt's preaching.

Thirdly; furthermore I affirm, that Mr. ORTON muſt alſo have been wrong in ſuppoſing, or inferring, that the 62 weeks mentioned *v.* 26, have any reference whatever to the preaching of the goſpel by John Baptiſt, as no ſuch circumſtance is in the leaſt alluded to. It ſhould ſeem that Mr. Orton himſelf was conſcious of this, when he ſays, "indeed it is ſaid, *v.* 26, And after 62 weeks ſhall Meſſiah be CUT off." This period of time, which implies 434 years, means the intermediate ſpace from the time the TEMPLE was finiſhed to the DEATH of Chriſt. Mr. Orton admits that this period was to commence at, or with the completion of the temple by Nehemiah; but ſays that "at the end of that time Meſſiah WAS TO APPEAR, that is, his goſpel was to be opened upon the world by John the Baptiſt." But I ſay, that at the end of that time it ſays Meſſiah was to be CUT OFF, not to APPEAR. It was as much as 82 years from the time of the Jews' return from Babylon, or reſtoration from their 70 years captivity in the firſt year of Cyrus, and juſt 80 years from the laying the foundation of the temple by Zerubbabel, Ezra iii. 8—13, to the completion of it by Nehemiah, which is juſt 7 weeks, or 49 years, and the age of Chriſt, that is, 33 years, added together.

Fourthly, I affirm, that the one week mentioned *v.* 27, has no connection with, but is totally diſtinct from, either the 69 weeks or the 70 weeks. I ſhall not here take upon me to riſk an opinion

opinion as to what is preciſely meant by the words following; "And in the midſt of the week he ſhall cauſe the ſacrifice and the oblation to ceaſe, &c." It may poſſibly imply or bear the conſtruction which Mr. ORTON puts upon it; but I ſhould be rather of the opinion that it implies that Chriſt's death was to take place at the half of the week, and that the other half was to be accompliſhed by his apoſtles. And as to the inference which Mr. ORTON draws from *v.* 24, viz. "That the events to be brought to paſs by Chriſt's death, are placed at the end of the 70 weeks," I have only to repeat it as my opinion, that the whole verſe refers to the BIRTH of Chriſt; for, had not his birth taken place, neither his miniſtry nor his crucifixion could. But this part of the matter being totally foreign to my preſent purpoſe, I ſhall decline adding any thing further.

Fifthly, I proceed to ſhew, that "the going forth of the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem," took place in the FIRST year of CYRUS King of Perſia, and not in the 7th year of ARTAXERXES King of Perſia; conſequently, the 69 weeks commenced in the firſt year of Cyrus alſo: and that there was only 483 years from that time to the birth of Chriſt, not 536 years, the time allowed by our chronologiſts.

I cannot help expreſſing my aſtoniſhment that any perſon or perſons ſhould, in their reſearch after truth, paſs by and reject ſuch a number of primary paſſages, the meaning of which it is impoſſible to miſtake, and then have recourſe to one or two conjectural,

conjectural, ſecondary paſſages, which will not by any means bear the conſtruction they put upon, or that is required from them. Howbeit, that this has been the caſe, I refer in the firſt inſtance to the prophecy of Jeremiah, xxv. 12, which ſays, "And it ſhall come to paſs, when ſeventy years are accompliſhed, that I will puniſh the king of Babylon, and that nation, ſaith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual deſolations, &c." When was this to happen? I anſwer, at the end of the 70 years of the Jews' captivity. And to whom? I anſwer, to the Chaldeans. And did it ſo happen? Certainly it DID, preciſely at the time predicted, when Cyrus king of Perſia overturned and took poſſeſſion of the empire, which was never afterward re-eſtabliſhed.

Obſerve here, the deſtruction of Babylon, and the return of the Jews from their 70 years captivity, were to take place at one and the ſame time. Compare the above verſe with ch. xxix. 10, and ſee how exactly they agree and correſpond in both particulars. Howbeit, Mr. Orton, together with the reſt of our learned commentators, do not heſitate to give a flat contradiction to the word of GOD himſelf, ſpoken by the prophet Jeremiah, and ſay, that he did NOT THEN viſit them, but that it was as much as 49 years AFTER, before he cauſed their captivity to be reſtored. I preſume they did not at the time call to mind the teſtimony which Balaam has given of God's immutability, Numb. xxiii. 19, where he ſays, "GOD is NOT a man that

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HE ſhould lie, or the ſon of man that HE ſhould repent. Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good?" Obſerve then, he has ſaid by his faithful prophet Jeremiah, "that after 70 years were accompliſhed at Babylon he would viſit them, and perform his good word toward them, in cauſing them to return to Jeruſalem." Compare this with Dan. ix. 2, and all with the firſt and third chapters of Ezra, and ſee and judge how minutely they tend to corroborate and confirm the point in hand, viz. that the commandment to reſtore, &c. certainly took place in the firſt year of Cyrus.

If further proof was neceſſary, ſee in Iſai. xliv. 28, what God ſays of Cyrus, "He is my ſhepherd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure; even ſaying to Jeruſalem, THOU ſhalt be built, and to the Temple, THY foundation ſhall be laid." See alſo ch. xlv. 1, 4, "For Jacob my ſervant's ſake, and Iſrael mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name, &c." *v.* 13, "I have raiſed him up in righteouſneſs, and I will direct all his ways: he ſhall build my city, and he ſhall let go my captives; not for price, nor reward, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts." Here you may plainly perceive, that God had fixed upon Cyrus for this very PURPOSE, as much as 170 years before his reign, viz. for the purpoſe of reſtoring the Jews, ſee *v.* 4, 13. And that Cyrus, though a heathen, underſtood this, is evident: ſee Ezra i. 2, "Thus ſaith Cyrus King of Perſia, The Lord God of Heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he

hath

hath charged me to build him an houſe at Jeruſalem, which is in Judah." Howbeit, our learned commentators, being wiſe above that which is written, ſay, that it was not in the firſt year of Cyrus that the commandment to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem took place, but that it was in the ſeventh year of ARTAXERXES king of Perſia.

But let us ſee upon what authority they ground this aſſertion. Mr. Orton ſays, "that the commandment referred to by Dan. ix. 25, is the commandment, or grant, to Ezra, for reſtoring the CHURCH and STATE of the Jews; for THAT, he THINKS, is meant by the expreſſion of reſtoring and building Jeruſalem." Now I ſhould be very glad to know what right he, or any other perſon, has to think that the paſſage bears a different meaning to what is plainly expreſſed, which is, that "from the going forth of the COMMANDMENT TO RESTORE and to BUILD JERUSALEM, to Meſſiah the Prince," ſhould be ſo and ſo. Obſerve, the COMMANDMENT TO RESTORE! That obtained by Ezra of Artaxerxes, is no more than a grant, that is, a permiſſive leave, ſee Ezra vii. 6, "And the king granted him all his requeſt," &c. again verſe 23, "Whatſoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the houſe of the God of heaven: for why ſhould there be wrath againſt the realm of the king and his ſons." Now obſerve, this ſtill amounts to no more than an acquieſcence or compliance with Ezra's requeſt, and to prevent the wrath of God againſt the king and his ſons; alſo the offering of gold and ſilver, &c.

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is evidently with the ſame intent, and for the ſame purpoſe, and that is fully implied in chap. viii. 22, "For I was aſhamed to require of the king a band of ſoldiers and horſemen to help us againſt the enemy in the way; becauſe we had ſpoken unto the king, ſaying, the hand of our God is upon all them for good that ſeek him, &c." This proves that all the orders of the king were in conſequence of Ezra's requeſt and application. But we do not read a ſyllable of any voluntary COMMAND, any RESTORATION, or any orders about building Jeruſalem. On the contrary, it ſays, verſe 24, that Ezra ſeparated twelve of the chief prieſts, &c. to take an exact account of the ſilver and gold veſſels, &c. and take care of it. For what purpoſe? I anſwer, to deliver them to the chief prieſts, and the chief of the fathers of Iſrael which were THEN AT JERUSALEM, ſee verſe 29. Moreover, it is ſaid, verſe 36, that they furthered the people, and the houſe of God, that is, helped them. Now all this I conceive tends to prove one thing certain, which is, that the people had been reſtored, and Jeruſalem built, before: alſo, that the veſſels of the houſe of the Lord which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away, did Cyrus RESTORE to Sheſhbazzar the PRINCE of JUDAH, and he brought them again to Jeruſalem, ſee i. 7—11. Obſerve, it is ſaid, Ezra i. 1, That the Lord STIRRED up the ſpirit of Cyrus, king of Perſia, TO DO ALL THIS; and in verſe 2 Cyrus confeſſes, that God had charged him to build him an houſe at Jeruſalem. Again, mark the anſwer given to the Samaritans, iv. 3: by

Zerub-

Zerubbabel, Jeſhua, &c. " Ye have nothing to do with us to build an houſe unto our God; but we ourſelves together will build unto the Lord God of Iſrael, as king Cyrus, the king of Perſia, hath COMMANDED us," not permitted us. Alſo ch. v. 13, " The ſame king Cyrus made a decree to build this houſe of God."

But above all, mark the contents of the roll of record, which king Darius ordered to be ſought for, vi. 3—6; which gives particular directions as to the ſize of the houſe and the materials; alſo that the expenſes were to be given out of the king's houſe; alſo that the golden and ſilver veſſels of the houſe of God be RESTORED, every one to his place, and place them into the houſe of God. Which decree Darius appears very well to have underſtood the IMPORT of; for he ſays, verſe 11, " That whoſoever ſhall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his houſe, and being ſet up, let him be hanged thereon:" nay he goes further, and ſays, " and let his houſe be made a DUNGHILL for this," that is, for refuſing to obey the injunctions of the Almighty, as ſet in force by this edict of Cyrus.

With reſpect to their inference, that this grant to Ezra was for the purpoſe of RESTORING the CHURCH and STATE of the Jews, I deny it; and affirm, that he did nothing more than rectify and correct, or cauſe to be rectified and corrected, the abuſes which had CREPT into the church and ſtate of the Jews; for I inſiſt that the ſtate was reſtored, when Cyrus delivered the veſſels of the houſe of the Lord to SHESHBAZZAR, the PRINCE of Judah.

And

And as to the reſtoration of the church, I think it may be allowed to have taken place when Jeſhua and Zerubbabel built the altar of the God of Iſrael, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moſes the man of God. And they ſet the altar upon his baſes, &c. Alſo Zerubbabel and the elders appointed the Levites from 20 years old and upwards to lay the foundation of the temple of the Lord, and ſet the prieſts in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the ſons of Aſaph, with ſymbols, to praiſe the Lord after the ordinance of David king of Iſrael: and again; when they kept the dedication of the houſe of God with joy, when the temple was finiſhed; ſee vi. 15—22.

But to return to the literal expreſs words of Daniel, viz. from the command to reſtore and to build Jeruſalem, &c. that is, to reſtore the people from their captivity, and build the CITY of JERUSALEM; which, I inſiſt, was done by the edict of Cyrus, ſee Ezra ii. 70, and iv. 12, when there was no leſs than 49,697, male perſons reſtored, ſee ii. 64, 65. Whereas there were no more than 1754 that came along with Ezra in the ſeventh year of Artaxerxes, ſee viii. 3—15, 18—21.

Now having, I truſt, ſucceeded in proving that the commencement of the reſtoration took place in the firſt year of Cyrus, and according to the prophecy of Daniel, there could be no more than 483 years from that period till the birth of Chriſt, (and not 536, as ſet forth by our chronologiſts) I conclude, that I have completely proved my fifth propoſition. Beſides, if further proof was

neceſſary, I refer to Matt. i. 17, where it is ſaid, there were only 14 generations from David to the going into captivity; which is not more than 500 years. Whereas the next 14 generations, according to the above ſtatement, will amount to 553 years, 53 years more than the former; and yet our chronologiſts will have it to be 53 years more.

	Years.
Year of the World in the firſt year of Cyrus, ſee Propoſition IV. - - - - -	3636
From then till the birth of Chriſt, 69 weeks of years, viz.	483
Year of the world when Chriſt was born and not 4004. - - -	4119

Should there yet be any, who ſtill perſiſt in adhering to an uncertain chronology, (which even its own votaries allow to be contrardictory, and intricate in the extreme) in preference to the ſure and unerring word of prophecy, which is nothing leſs than the word of God, conſequently of courſe the word of truth; they are at liberty ſo to do. But let them take this with them, that by ſo doing they will give their aſſent to augment the preceding errors juſt 53 years more. And ſhould they be diſpoſed to diſallow that I have proved my firſt propoſition, it will only add 60 years more to the former magnitude; as I am confident that my third propoſition is totally incontrovertible. At any rate, I muſt inſiſt that I have made good my undertaking, viz. to prove the whole according to ſcripture; which I deem quite ſufficient.

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PROPOSITION VI.

In order further to corroborate and confirm the truth of the preceding Propoſition, I undertake to ſhew, that the Period of Time repreſented Dan. viii. 14, under the figurative Term of 2300 Days, that is, Years, did not expire in the Year 1750, according to the Opinion of the late Mr. FLETCHER, of MADELEY; which, had our Chronology from the firſt Year of Cyrus been right, it would have done; but that it certainly does and will expire in or with the Year 1798.

THE opinion of Mr. FLETCHER on this point, we find in the Arminian Magazine for July 1793, page 373; "Here, ſays he, the prophet ſaw, or rather heard, as in *v.* 13, a ſaint aſking another ſaint, how long the church ſhould be thus corrupted and deſolate? and the anſwer was, till the end of 2300 days, and then the ſanctuary ſhould be cleanſed. Here is a number given, ſays he, a number by which we may know that we are come to the very time the Spirit of God had in view; a number, which fixes the beginning of the things that are coming upon the earth. Let us take ſome notice of it.

Firſt, "When ſhall the ſanctuary begin to be cleanſed, in ſuch a meaſure as to deſerve to be taken notice of by the Spirit of God? At the end of 2300 days; which are proved to be prophetic days, and to ſignify each a whole year, by the pro-

phecy of 70 weeks, and many other places of Scripture. He then goes on and ſays,

Secondly, "What is the epocha from which we muſt begin to reckon thoſe 2300 years? It is evident it muſt be the time of the viſion itſelf, which the prophet has taken particular care to obſerve; for, in the firſt verſe of the chapter, he ſays, "In the third year of the reign of King Belſhazzar, a viſion appeared to me, even unto me Daniel."

Mr. FLETCHER then enters into ſome minute diſcuſſions, as to what time this Belſhazzar began his reign, and then ſays, "If we truſt or admit the canons of Ptolemy, which, he ſays, is the moſt probable, it follows, that the third year of Belſhazzar's reign falls in with 556 years before Chriſt, which is the epocha wanted; add to it four or five years, on account of the difference of the Judaical year of 360 days, and ours, which is 365 and above; add three years more for the time that Belſhazzar HAD reigned when Daniel had the viſion, and, ſays he, we have about 550; which, being ſubſtracted from 2300, give the year 1750, for the cleanſing of the ſanctuary, &c."

Now it is extremely painful to be under the neceſſity of pointing out an error in any production of ſo great and good a man as the late Mr. FLETCHER was; but certainly I cannot help thinking that he has given occaſion for it above, where he ſays, "add three years more for the time that Belſhazzar HAD reigned when Daniel had the viſion." Obſerve, Mr. FLETCHER himſelf ſays, that 556 WAS the THIRD year of Belſhazzar.

Then

Then, in God's name, what has the time he HAD reigned BEFORE, to do with the matter in queſtion? for he juſt before tells us, "It is evident this time, that is, the time of commencement, muſt be the time of the viſion itſelf, viz. the third year of the reign of Belſhazzar."

He alſo ſpeaks of adding four or five years on account of the difference of the Judaical year of 360 days, and ours, which is 365 and above. I am ſorry that here again there appears further occaſion for criticiſm; for, admitting that his idea is right, (which by the bye I do not) yet certainly his calculation muſt be erroneous; for five days and upwards in a year, for 556 years, would make as much as eight years difference, inſtead of FOUR or FIVE. Beſides, if it be deemed neceſſary to reckon that odd time for the firſt 556 years, it will be neceſſary to purſue the ſame reckoning during the whole of the 2300 years. Indeed, the two above intricate obſervations or ſolutions, ſeem to be nothing leſs than complicate miſtakes, either of Mr. FLETCHER's, or ſomebody for him. But admitting the calculation in the firſt inſtance to be right, yet the idea is totally inadmiſſible; for if you reckon the firſt 556 years, you muſt alſo reckon the whole of the 2300 years, which will be about 25 years more. Had Mr. FLETCHER thought proper to have proceeded in calculating ſimply on the matter in queſtion, agreeable to the time he firſt fixes it, viz. when Daniel had this viſion, according to our received chronology juſt 556 years before Chriſt, it would then appear that

that the time 2300 years would have ended in 1745, as we are not to INCLUDE the third year of Belſhazzar, but to reckon FROM the third year of Belſhazzar; and this, I ſay, would have been ſtrictly right, had our received chronology from the firſt year of Cyrus to the birth of Chriſt been right; but I ſay that time is over-reckoned, agreeable to my laſt propoſition, by 53 years, which 53 years are to be added to 1745, and it makes juſt 1798, the preſent year of our Lord; with which, I ſhall prove, that period does or will end.

I agree with Mr. FLETCHER, that this time of 2300 years is to begin to be reckoned from the time of the viſion, viz. from the third year of Belſhazzar; and THAT, I further admit, was juſt 20 years before the firſt year of Cyrus, only that the third year is not be included; and then there will remain only - - - 19 years
to the firſt year of Cyrus; then add
to that 69 weeks, or - - - 483 years,
the time from that event to the birth
of Chriſt, and then add to that - 1798, the
preſent year of our Lord, and you ——
have the exact time produced - - 2300 years.

Here I think it neceſſary to notice, that Mr. FLETCHER has ſaid, that this time is put to ſignify how long the CHURCH ſhould be corrupted and lie deſolate. It would have been well if he had mentioned what Church it was that he meant; the words are, "How long ſhall be the viſion concerning the daily ſacrifice, and the tranſgreſſion of

of deſolation, to give both the SANCTUARY and the HOST to be trodden under foot?" Now I think, if there is meaning in words, this ſignifies the Jewiſh ſanctuary and land, and the HOST, the people or nation of the Jews; and that it is THEY, and THEY only, are the people that were to lie deſolate 2300 years from that time. What is to happen to them afterwards, I ſhall decline entering into particulars of now, being foreign to my preſent ſubject, any further than it ſays, At the end of that time the SANCTUARY ſhall be cleanſed, that is, the temple and land of Canaan purified and prepared for their return in the latter days. See Dan. x. and xii.* omitting the xith, which is improperly placed, being in the firſt year of Darius. What Mr. FLETCHER means by ſaying, that at this time it ſhall only begin to be cleanſed, I know not; but certainly the words are, "Then ſhall the ſanctuary be CLEANSED," (not begin to be cleanſed) and that too I ſhould think, for the purpoſe of receiving its antient proprietors once more to their rightful inheritance and native land.

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* Particularly the 14th verſe of the x. chapter; alſo the laſt verſe of the ſame chapter, and the 1ſt verſe of the xii. chapter.

PROPOSITION VII.

In order further to demonſtrate that the whole ſtatement of this Chronology is ſtrictly correct, I now proceed to ſhew, that there is every reaſon to believe and infer, and that it appears very clearly, that the preciſe time that Abraham was called of God to offer up his ſon Iſaac on Mount Moria, as a type of Chriſt, was at exactly the half of the period from the Creation of the World to the Crucifixion of Chriſt.

SOME authors have entertained the opinion, that Iſaac muſt have been as much as 33 years old at the time he ſuffered himſelf to be bound of his father, as bearing more affinity with the age of Chriſt. Others have contended, that he was not then more than 25. This being the caſe, and the preciſe time uncertain, I ſhall take the liberty of ſuppoſing him to be juſt 28 years old at the time; and we are informed Gen. xxi. 5, that his father Abraham was an 100 when Iſaac was born; add to both theſe the age of the world when Abram was born, viz. 1948, and they make juſt 2076 to be the year of the world when Iſaac was bound by his father Abraham, with the intention of being offered up for a burnt offering, as a type of Chriſt. Add then the age of Chriſt when crucified, viz. 33 years, to the age of the world when Chriſt was born, as hath been proved by this chronology, viz. 4119, and both will make juſt 4152, which is juſt double the period of time which had elapſed previous

previous to Iſaac being bound by his father Abraham, with a view to be offered up as a type of Chriſt.

What has induced me to dwell ſo particularly on this circumſtance is, having been given to underſtand that the laſt ſentence of the 14th verſe of the xxii. chap. of Geneſis is not properly tranſlated from the original Hebrew text, or it would run thus, "in this mount the Lord ſhall be ſeen;" that is, the Lord Jehovah ſhall be ſeen. Which was actually verified when Chriſt ſuffered upon that very identical MOUNT MORIA, on which, you will obſerve, the temple was built, ſee 2 Chron. iii. 1. And that it was the Lord Jehovah HIMSELF that was ſeen on that mount, I refer to Chriſt's own words, as recorded by his beloved diſciple, John the Evangeliſt, ſee John xiv. 7—11. And I think there can be no manner of doubt, but that it was the ſame perſon that appeared to Abram, Gen. xiv. and xviii. chapters. That this is not an unwarrantable conſtruction upon the above paſſage in John, I refer to Iſai. xliii. 10, 11; xliv. 6, 8, 24; xlv. 5 to 23; xlvi. 9; xlvii. 4; xlviii. 17; xlix. 26; liv. 5, 8; ſee alſo John i. 1, 3, 10, 14; 1 Timothy iii. 16; alſo Hoſea xiii. 4, 9, 14.

Having now, I truſt, completely cleared up all my propoſitions, collectively as well as ſeverally, I ſhall only add a few remarks. If this chronology is not incontrovertibly correct, certain it is that the ſcripture is inadequate and inſufficient to furniſh us with a connected chronology; which would be a very eſſential defect, and greatly tend to derogate

from its divine authenticity as recorded by Moſes, who was, without the leaſt doubt, inſtructed by God himſelf for that purpoſe. And as to the 69 weeks mentioned Dan. ix. 25, which imply 483 years, and which have been proved to commence in the firſt year of Cyrus; I make no heſitation whatever in firmly relying upon the truth and verity of that divine prophecy, in preference to a vague, uncertain and confuſed chronology, on which, its very votaries have confeſſed, there is no certainty or dependance to be placed.

THE END.